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AMBROSE MACLANDRETH
OR THE
RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIAST



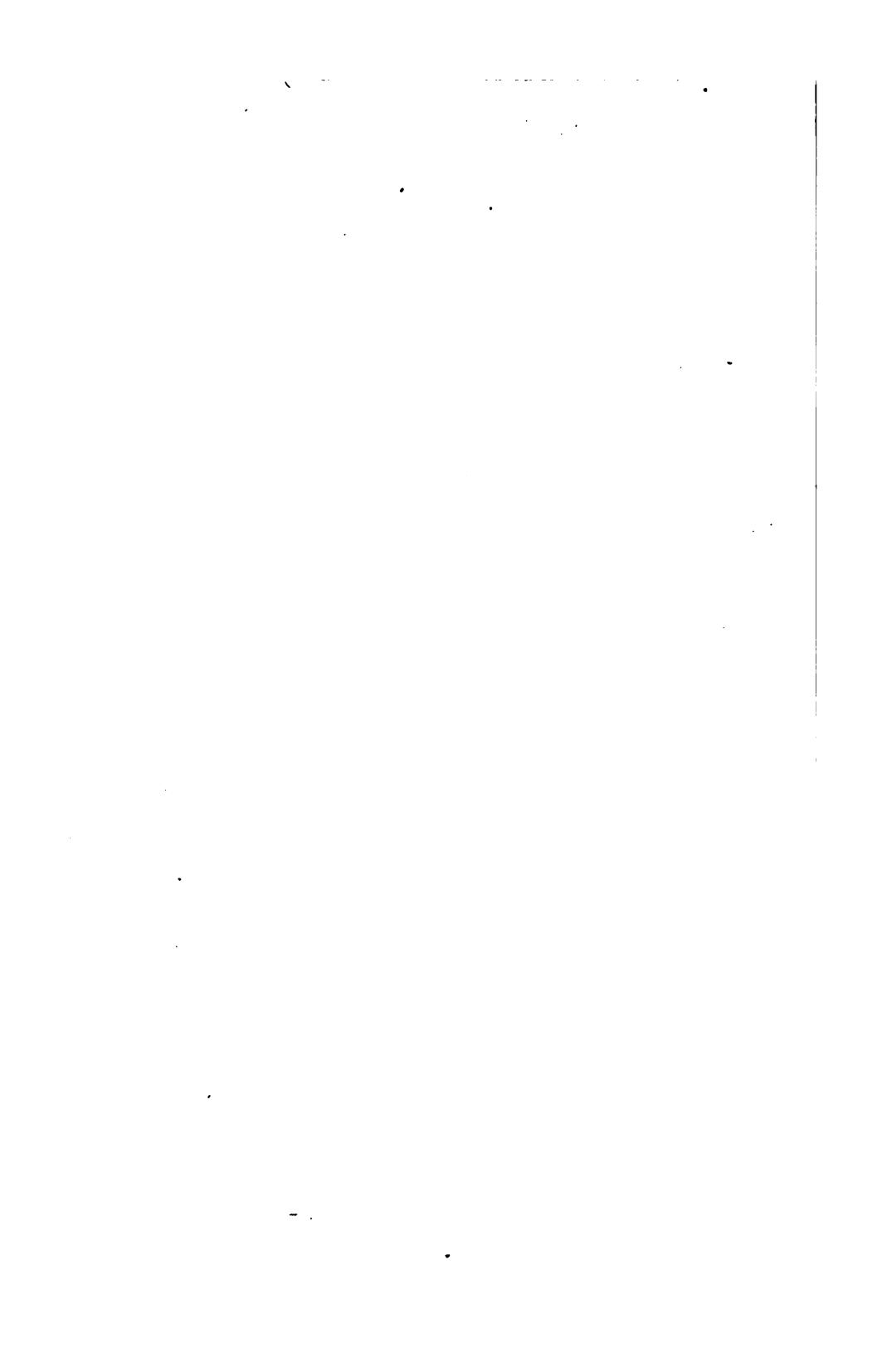
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AMBROSE MACLANDRETH.



AMBROSE MACLANDRETH;

OR, THE

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIAST.

A Tale.

BY

A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

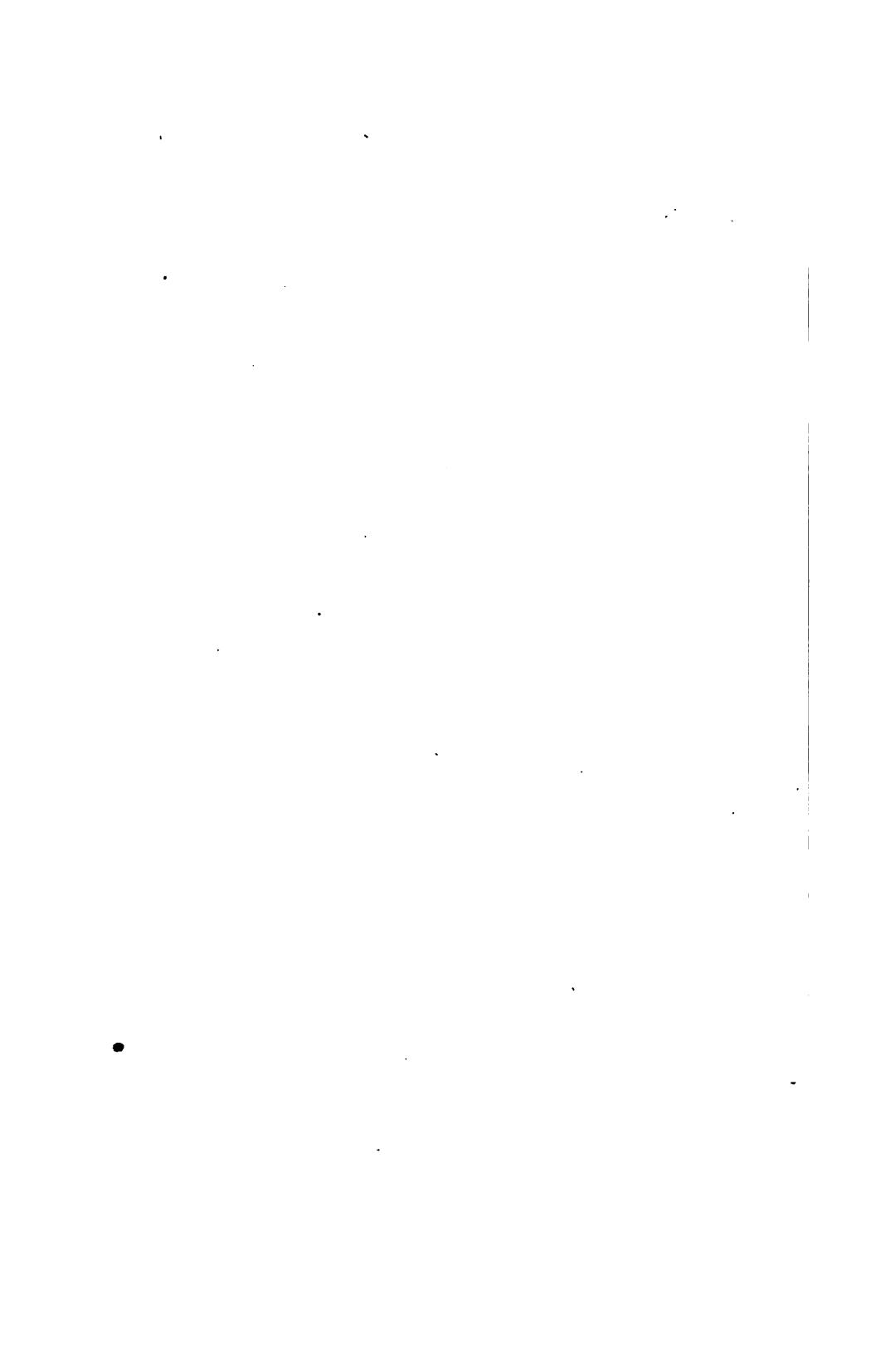
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CHAPTER I.

“ With instinct is the human soul endowed
Which nature knoweth not : that instinct liking,
That makes the tender and adventurous bird,
To gain some other food in distant lands,
Traverse in one bold flight the ocean's waves.
What do they go to ask of brighter climes?
Have they not 'neath our roofs their moss and nest—
Their fields of food all ripened by the sun,
And' grains that fall to feed their young?”

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.

LIFE generally takes its complexion from the society in which we move, as certain insects are known to take the colour of the tree upon whose bark they subsist. Man, viewed in this light, is, in a great measure, a creature of circumstances, since his inward being is chiefly made up of ideas and sentiments produced by surrounding objects. His mind in childhood is like a fountain on the mountain top, which may easily be turned to this or that side of it, and thus forced into quite a different course from what it would otherwise have taken.

We seldom find persons born and bred near the sea, seeking after rural enjoyments. Nor have we, on the other hand, often witnessed an individual brought up in some tranquil village in the country, that would willingly change his quiet vocation for the more romantic employment of the mariner.

To consider this rule, however, as of universal application, would be to put man on a level with the brute. The person whom I am now about to introduce to the reader, forms a striking contrast to an individual of so pliable a nature. Mr. Ambrose Maclandreth was of an ancient and respectable family in Gloucestershire. Some have intimated that his great-grandfather was a Scotch gentleman, highly respected for his virtuous life and generous disposition. The mere name is, however, all that appears to me to justify such a report.

His father and brother were already in the field, defending their country's liberties; and his birth had cost his mother her life. While yet an infant, he was placed under the care of his grandfather, who was then in the decline of life; reposing on the laurels that his youth

and manhood, devoted to the service of his country, had nobly won for him. To train his grandson for military life constituted the sole object of his existence. This one idea engrossed all his thoughts. He beguiled his early days with tales of valour and heroism. He exerted himself to the utmost to model his young mind after his own.

Despite all these efforts, young Maclandreth had marked out for himself a very different course. Being naturally of a peaceable disposition, he could not see the lawfulness of taking up arms against those made of the same blood with himself. He became heartily tired of the importunity of his friends, and thoroughly disgusted with the various arts by which they endeavoured to force him to enter the army: he regarded every one of them as an enemy to his peace, and determined to seek some quiet retreat, where he might find that tranquillity, for which nature and grace had so adapted him. He, therefore, resolved to quit his grandfather's roof as soon as possible, and trust to Providence for the issue of his undertaking.

It was his grandfather's custom to spend a

few weeks every year with an old comrade, who lived in a romantic spot near Rydal Mount. The following day, he was to set out on his journey. This was an opportunity too precious to be lost, and young Ambrose determined to make most of his way immediately after his grandfather's departure.

Under the pretence of visiting a friend in the country, he told the servant not to be uneasy about him, as he intended to remain with him for a short time. About noon he commenced his pilgrimage, not knowing whither he went. The day was remarkably fine, and, at intervals, so hot that he was obliged to take shelter in a small ale-house by the roadside, till the cool of the evening. Being shown into a small parlour by himself, he took out his Bible, and read the history of Abraham, the trials of Isaac, and the adventures of Jacob, and marked such passages as he thought peculiarly applicable to his own case.

So absorbed had he become in this pleasing and profitable work, that when he closed his treasure, the shades of evening were rapidly gathering round him. The stars were already

visible. As he gazed upon them, he beguiled the tedium of his lonely journey by thinking that they were the very stars that lighted Abraham during his pilgrimage—watched over the dreaming Jacob, while, like himself, he spent the first night from his kindred. Then, he thought of the inspiration they seemed to have imparted to the poetic David, when with rapture he exclaimed—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." He next wondered what kind of complexion they assumed, while witnessing the agonies of the Redeemer in the Garden. Probably they turned away from the sight, as the sun did when He died. Nature, though mute, was eloquent in her vindication of her Maker's character. His enthusiasm knew no bound. He fancied himself a second Abraham. Everything seemed pregnant with promises of future greatness, and rife with the glories that were to illumine his bright career. Thus the repose of nature exerted the most friendly influence on his mind. He thought the moon looked kindly upon him. He imagined the whole universe as a vast theatre,—

earth, the stage—the sun and moon, the chandeliers that lighted it—the stars, the innumerable galleries teeming with spectators anxiously watching the proceedings—the actors, all the fallen race of man—the subject, Redemption—the hero, the Messiah—the plot, the overthrow of vice and the final triumph of virtue.

While youth and hope were equally busy in counting his future exploits in the cause of virtue, a ruffian rushed out of a large bush near the side of the road, and furiously attacked him, demanding his money or his life. Our young adventurer's enthusiasm getting the better of his judgment, he checked his first impulse—which was to strike the fellow—and said to himself, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God;” and unbuttoning his coat, he took out his Bible. His assailant, mistaking it for a case of pistols, gave a horrible yell, took to his heels, and was no more seen. Seeing the result, he cried out with rapture and amazement—“Thy word is a sun and a shield;—when a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” The effect produced on his

mind by this small incident was electrifying. To minds of cooler temperament, such occurrences may appear trifling. Yet, I very much doubt that a sage is to be found, stoic enough, to regard with indifference the smallest of the links of which the chain of existence is composed. Every rare event in our lives forms a new era in the history of our faith, in what we regard as the guiding-star of our existence; be that fate, accident, God, or whatever else the mind is capable of imagining, as exerting such a controlling influence on our destinies. Faith, whatever be its nature, cannot remain stationary: it must either increase or diminish. That young Ambrose's faith in God's providence became greatly strengthened by his singular deliverance, cannot be wondered at, when we consider the enthusiasm of his mind at the time it occurred.

CHAPTER II.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd:
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

GRAY.

EXCITEMENT often carries us through difficulties that would otherwise prove far too formidable for us: and when we have overcome them, it is some time before we are able thoroughly to comprehend what we have gone through. The general outlines invariably leave a deep impression on the mind; but the minutiae must be supplied during the cooler moments of reflection that gradually succeed: and this was precisely the case with young Maclandreth. Finding himself standing in a large field adjoining a

farm-house, he was not a little confused, until recollecting his having travelled about thirty miles by a stage coach, that overtook him not far from the spot whence he made his escape; and afterwards his having turned from the main road into a foot-path that conducted him across a small hill into the very field where he now stood, an idea flashed across his mind that he could not be far from the town of Gloucester. Impatient to realize this pleasing thought, he entered the house, and having ascertained the locality, he was gratified on being informed that he was within a short distance of that city.

The kind farmer, on being told of what had passed during the preceding night, requested him to repose under his roof for that day. Having acknowledged his kindness and participated of the repast that was set before him, he retired to rest. The deliverance of the past night was not, however, forgotten. Bending himself before God, he gave Him hearty thanks for his providential escape, and dedicated himself anew to His service. In this happy state of mind, he almost instantaneously fell into a profound sleep.

During this rest, if it may be called so after such a night, all he had undergone passed in review before him. Nor was his repose less signalized on account of the varied characters of the dreams by which he was incessantly haunted. One in particular deserves to be mentioned, as it affords a kind of clue to the future. He saw a venerable old gentleman entering his room, and giving him a precious jewel, saying in a tremulous whisper, as he pressed it into his hand, "*Keep it and thou shalt prosper.*"

When he awoke, the night was casting her dark mantle over the earth, and he heard the servants joyfully congratulating each other on their return from their arduous toils, and his kind hostess gently reproving them for disturbing the stranger that was in bed; at the same time, observing that he was uncommonly low in his spirits, as if his wits were not exactly like those of other men. This being corroborated by a hearty laugh from the rest of the company, the conversation turned upon another topic—and, perhaps, more interesting upon the whole—relative to their own affairs. He got out of

bed as silently as possible, lest he should in the least degree interrupt an intercourse in which mind and body seemed equally engaged. While dressing himself, as he was bending to tie his shoe, he saw a large blue eye quite covering a small hole that was in the thin wainscot, which served as a partition between his bedroom and the adjoining one, intently fixed upon him. No sooner, however, had the little urchin seen him turning towards the door, than he clamorously rushed down the stairs, telling his mamma that the stranger was getting up. On this important notice, the whole group immediately dispersed, and no other sound was heard than that of his kind hostess busily preparing a breakfast for him, as she afterwards playfully observed; while the rest of the family were in the adjoining room taking supper.

Having done justice to what was set before him, he betook himself into the other room, where, to his astonishment, he saw about thirty men, six or seven women, and four or five lads, sitting together in a large rustic apartment; while a blazing fire revealed the innocent happiness that beamed on their healthful counte-

nances. At the head of a large square table sat the farmer himself, with his wife on the right hand and his eldest daughter, with the other children, on the left; and he, as a stranger, was permitted to sit next to his kind hostess, perhaps because they had entered the room about the same time, or, more probably, from deference to him as a stranger, that being considered as the highest honour.

He now, for once at least in his life, found himself "the observed of all observers." Every eye was intently fixed upon him—every countenance wore an expression characteristic of the mind within.

When the confusion that his entrance had created ceased, the farmer, who, he now saw, was going to conduct the family worship, called upon one of the lads that sat on his left hand to give out the Evening Hymn, which he did with all the gravity that the solemnity of such an occasion demands:—

THE EVENING HYMN.

Dread Sovereign! let my evening song.
 Like holy incense rise;
 Assist the offerings of my tongue
 To reach the lofty skies.

Through all the dangers of the day,
 Thy hand was still my guard,
 And still to drive my wants away
 Thy mercy stood prepared.

Perpetual blessings from above
 Encompass me around ;
 But O, how few returns of love
 Hath my Creator found !

What have I done for Him that died
 To save my wretched soul ?
 How are my follies multiplied,
 Fast as my minutes roll !

Lord, with this guilty heart of mine,
 To Thy dear Cross I flee ;
 And to Thy grace my soul resign
 To be received by Thee.

Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
 I lay me down to rest,
 As in th' embraces of my God,
 Or on my Saviour's breast.

The simplicity and deep pathos with which his youthful lips pronounced these verses produced a great impression upon Mr. Maclan-dreth's mind. In one of his sentiments, the novelty of the whole scene, together with the deep tone of piety that seemed to pervade the whole group, while raising their song of praise to the Father of their spirits, could not fail, after what he had passed through, to excite feelings of no ordinary character, somewhat

akin to the sudden and pleasing feeling of a shipwrecked mariner, at the first touch of land. His agitated soul felt at once as reposing under the tree of life, enjoying the delights of Christian sympathy, drinking deep of the river that makes glad the city of God; and as the farmer read the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, and expatiated on the valedictory discourse of our Saviour to his disciples on the evening prior to his leaving them, he felt every sentence sinking deep into his soul, touching new springs of love and gratitude, and opening new fountains of consolations. He considered himself as already more than recompensed for his toils and sufferings; but when the prayer was offered up, and the eternal throne grasped in his behalf with the Patriarch's zeal, while wrestling with the angel in Peniel, he felt as if he already stood on the very threshold of the holy city, and was reminded of his mortality only by the return of his consciousness, whose progress gradually lessened the glimpse he had obtained till it was lost in the distance.

Such are God's dealings with his children, that he leads them by the hand through this

world, for he tells us that all His saints are in His hand; but, at intervals, like an indulgent Father, raising the little ones on His shoulder that they may command a more extensive prospect, He lifts them up above the narrow horizon of the seen and temporal, that they may glance at the unseen and spiritual.

The evening was now far spent, indeed the streaks of the east showed that it was already day, and his intended journey to Bristol had to be performed. To part with these Christian friends, whose sympathy he had so richly enjoyed, and by whose holy fervour and zeal his soul had been so refreshed, was keenly felt by his affectionate and susceptible mind. Thus earthly friendship is but the damming up of the sorrow that overwhelms parting. So neighbouring are the fountains of joy and grief, that the one seldom flows without mingling its streams with the other. Their kindness, however, had greatly strengthened his confidence as to his future success. He became more calm and resigned, fully convinced that he was doing the will of Him in whose hands were all his ways.

Having exchanged some tokens of remembrance, they parted with one another, with the fullest assurance that they should meet again in that heavenly country which they so eagerly sought and in which separation is unknown, and the ties that were broken here by sin, are reunited, and rendered as permanent as eternity.

CHAPTER III.

“Oh! who would not welcome that moment’s returning,
When passion first waked a new life through his frame;
And his soul, like the wood that grows precious in burning,
Gave out all its sweets to love’s exquisite flame!”

MOORE.

ON his arrival in the city of Bristol, Mr. Mac-landreth entered the first inn that met his eye. Being a market day the commercial room was crowded to excess. Dissatisfied with the place, he was on the point of leaving; when the land-lady, seeing him rising from his seat, offered to take him to a more private accommodation, into which she had, about an hour before, conducted two other strangers. On his entering the room, the dream of the farm-house at once rushed upon his mind, so that he hardly knew where he was, nor what he sought there; for the old man that sat in an arm-chair by the fire, was to the very life, the man that gave

him the precious jewel, saying; "*Keep it and thou shalt prosper.*"

Having summoned all his philosophy to his aid, the tempest that raged within gradually abated, and he became a little more calm and composed. Still his mind wandered in unknown regions, filled with the most imposing objects, transcending all that he had ever seen, or heard, or felt before; and near which his wildest fancy had never ventured to rove. This delirium of delight having spent itself, he again felt his usual equanimity regaining the empire of his passions. Being, however, once lost, such an empire is ever afterwards to be regarded as something little short of precariousness itself. This sentiment, Maclandreth was on the point of realizing; for the ebbing of his passions was nothing less than preparation for mightier waves by which the master passion, love, overwhelmed all the others at the very outset of their rebellious career.

The sight of the fair daughter of the venerable gentleman whose presence had brought with it such strange and new bodings to his mind—as she gracefully bent over the sacred

page, and the music of her voice while the grey-headed father was treasuring with a miser's care every sentence that fell from her lips, in his heart, gave rise to no ordinary feelings in his bosom. All the baser passions stood abashed in the presence of so much purity and love—holy love formed the very soul of his ambition. He felt at once the congeniality of the atmosphere in which he breathed: nor were they less conscious of the charm that his presence seemed to have inspired. Nor can we indeed wonder that their sympathy should have so melted into one common interest, when we are informed that both parties were in quest of the same object.

The old man was very much dejected, and could find no comfort except in that exhaustless fountain, the word of God. He had just buried her who had been the sharer of his toils and comforts for nearly forty years; and the scenes which had so long witnessed their mutual sympathy and enjoyments appeared so fraught with all that recalled the delights of the past and reminded him of the loneliness of the present—that their sight became more

intolerable than death itself. It was on this account, and at the suggestion of his daughter, that he had been induced to quit his former residence, hoping that a new abode would be more conducive to the re-establishing of his health, and the prevention of those gloomy thoughts to which he was naturally predisposed. Having secured a small cottage in a tranquil part of the Principality, they were now on the way thither. On hearing these particulars, Mr. Maclandreth entered into a long dissertation on the mysteriousness of Divine Providence by which he had been led into their delightful company, together with the identity of the object of their pursuit.

These disclosures imperceptibly drew them closer to each other than they had hitherto ventured. Mr. Maclandreth had unconsciously drawn his chair close to that of Mr. Acehambur (for that, as he afterwards learned, was the name of that venerable gentleman), while Alison, his daughter, was all attention, and so completely absorbed in the conversation that, when dinner was announced, she, to her great

distress, to be sure, found she had drawn her chair close to the one occupied by Mr. Maclandreth.

CHAPTER IV.

“The soul’s dark cottage, batter’d and decay’d,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.”

EDMUND WALLER.

HAVING satisfied the cravings of nature, Mr. Maclandreth, impatient to learn more of his new friend’s history, proposed that their former conversation should be resumed. Mr. Ace-hambur, evidently pleased with the deference paid him by his young companion, said, that, for his part, he liked to say as much as could be said on a subject before new topics were introduced. Assuming an air of conscious superiority—an advantage which age seldom forgets—he dwelt much on the leading events of his life.

“When I was young,” said he, “I was one

of the most thoughtless beings that ever lived. In every scene of pleasure and dissipation, I was the first and out the last. I ate wickedness like bread and drank iniquity like water, and my feet moved swiftly along the path that leads to the gates of hell. Yes, yes—I went almost so far as to deny the Lord who bought me.

"But thanks be praised! thanks be praised!" he said, as the big tear rolled down his furrowed cheek, "He did not leave me to the hardness of my own evil and wicked heart. Oh! He is a kind parent, Mr. Maclandreth, and allow me to recommend Him to you, young friend, as the Guide of your youth."

Mr. Maclandreth said, with great emotion, that his constant prayer was, "My Father, be Thou the Guide of my youth."

"Yes, yes, dear youth," said Mr. Acehambur, "He is more ready to give than we are to receive—more ready to hear than we are to request. When I was quite spent in the service of the wicked one, having devoted my best years to the enemy of my soul, and seized with that lassitude attendant upon a long course of

dissipation, so that I was but a useless being in the enemy's ranks, ' He worked in me both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.' "

Here Miss Alison interrupted the conversation by telling her papa that Mr. Maclandreth would, perhaps, like to hear of the way in which he was led to become a professed disciple of Christ.

Young Ambrose's countenance brightened as he caught the suggestion of Miss Alison, saying, that nothing could give him greater delight than to hear of those blessed means that led his wayward feet to take that step which appropriates the kingdom of heaven.

Miss Alison's eyes glistened with delight as she saw the promptitude with which Mr. Maclandreth attended to her every wish.

" Thoughtless child," said Mr. Acehambur, smiling as he was uttering the words, guessing what was in her mind.

She blushed at this gentle reproof, fearing she had betrayed a feeling with which she thought none but herself acquainted.

To put an end to this slight confusion, Mr. Acehambur proceeded to the looked-for narrative :—

"When I was about twenty-two years of age," continued he, "I was introduced into the society of a young clergyman of the name of Percy. He was a lovely character. He was the first to speak to me about religion. He seemed indeed to answer the end of his creation. To bring poor miserable sinners to Christ formed his chief ambition, the soul of his ministry. He was never happy but when employed for God. He spoke to me of the evil of sin till I was induced to abandon it—of holiness till I was constrained to seek after it—of God till I was made to love Him above all things—of Christ till I felt myself bound, a willing captive, by the cords of His love, and I trust that the same heaven that received him will, also, unworthy as I am, receive me."

Here his voice became faltered—a slight convulsion seized him; but, on a sudden, his countenance, though suffused with tears, became irradiated with smiles of ineffable benignity, and his eyes fixed, as if nothing intervened between them and the blessed abode of his departed friend.

Mr. Maclandreth, though greatly moved,

observed that to lose religious friends is a great trial; but that it is a great comfort to think of the Friend that loveth at all times—the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, who ever liveth, making intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

"That is all my comfort," added Mr. Ace-hambur, with fervour—evidently showing that he could value real sympathy. "My obligations to Mr. Percy are innumerable. It was he that introduced me, first, to his sister, who afterwards became my wife, and then to all his connexions, in whose society I have been doubly blessed, both as it regards the life that now is, and that which is to come."

The conversation had now become a little brighter, and he fully entered into a detail of all the trifling incidents that contributed to strengthen the mutual attachment formed between him and Miss Percy, together with a full account of their marriage and their devotedness to each other.

The delight with which Mr. Maclandreth and Miss Alison exchanged looks during this narration might have been mistaken for a long

and steady friendship, had not the quick blush which followed betrayed a newer feeling and a more recent attachment.

The silence that ensued was complete. None was inclined to break it. It seemed to consummate their mutual enjoyment. A loud tap at the door startled them into real life again, and, immediately, a boisterous servant entered the room announcing that, were Mr. Acehambur determined to leave the following morning, the luggage must be taken to the coach-office, and that the porter was waiting his decision.

Mr. Acehambur left the room to see that all was safe. The young adventurer was now left alone with his idol. Both were silent. They durst not look at each other. Mr. Maclandreth regarded every moment now as the last of existence, but could not utter a word. He was confused and awkward in his manner. His fair companion, on the other hand, was almost fainting at the idea that they were to part, and, perhaps, never to meet again.

Mr. Acehambur returned. During his absence not a word had passed between the young lovers.

Guessing, however, from the appearance of Mr. Maclandreth, and the timidity evinced by Alison, and judging from his own feelings, for he had not yet forgotten the sentiments of youth, Mr. Acehambur relieved them by introducing a new subject upon which they could converse freely.

But Maclandreth was too confused to enable him to converse freely on any subject. His feelings were so new that he actually thought that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. His mind appeared like a vessel without a helm, at the mercy of every breeze, and obedient to every turn of the furious surge. He was ever flying from one topic to another, as if he had nothing in view but to avoid the one that he ardently wished, though evidently dreaded, to approach.

Mr. Acehambur at length succeeded in giving a lighter tone to the conversation. He spoke much of the reward that always attends virtuous deeds. "So it is," said Mr. Maclandreth, catching his meaning. "When I was quite a lad," continued he, "I was made instrumental to save the life of a fellow-being; and whenever

I think of that I feel such inward satisfaction,
in exchange for which the greatest earthly re-
ward would be but a poor compensation."

CHAPTER V.

"Tis to me you owe her:
Childless had you been else, and in the grave
Your name extinct.
* * * * *
Was by a wave wash'd off into the deep,
When instantly I plunged into the sea,
And buffeting the billows to her rescue,
Redeemed her life with half the loss of mine.
Like a rich conquest, in one hand I bore her,
And with the other dash'd the saucy waves,
That throng'd and press'd to rob me of my prize.
I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms:
Indeed you thank'd me; but a nobler gratitude
Rose in her soul: for from that hour she loved me,
Till for her life she paid me with herself.

OTWAY.

WHEN the landlady—whose undue attention had materially impaired the tone and manner of the conversation—withdrew, Miss Alison, who was ever ready to countenance Maclandreth, requested him to acquaint them with what he was about to relate when the landlady intruded upon them.

"With all my heart," was the reply. "The circumstances were simply these:—I was going a considerable distance from home on business for my grandfather. A part of my road lay

along a large river, and as I was walking, my attention was arrested by seeing two little girls on the bank of the river wringing their hands, and one of them shrieking most piteously, calling out for help. I quickly ran to their relief, when, to my astonishment, I saw that one of them was borne away by the current. I immediately plunged into the water, and by a desperate effort saved her life." Miss Alison shrieked out, and wildly ran into his arms, exclaiming, "I am she—I am she! You are the man that saved my life—you are the man that ____." Here her voice faltered, and pronouncing an incoherent blessing on his name, she fainted, and her head fell helplessly on his arm.

The scene was most affecting. Mr. Acehambur wept for joy to have found the deliverer of his only child; and Maclandreth's delight at these unexpected forebodings of future happiness was like a momentary delirium. He gazed on her placid cheek with a fondness that might have taught stoics themselves tenderness. This apparent sympathy with the daughter, at once, inclined the father in his fa-

vour. He thanked God for such a providential discovery. Then he looked in his face with a father's fondness, while his voice, as he gratefully acknowledged his obligations to him for saving the life of his beloved child, softened into the subduing tenderness of a mother's gratitude. He threw himself into every attitude of which his aged body was capable, but none could discover the joy he wished to express. Then he would hysterically pace about the room and intently gaze on him, examining his features, as if to ascertain the reality of his presence. Exhausted by the intensity of his feelings, he threw himself on the first chair that offered itself, hid his face in his hands, and sobbed aloud. The sterner traits of his character seemed to have deserted him—the milder qualities were alone visible. It often happens that the more manly and vigorous the mind is, the more irresistible the opposite qualities are, when fully developed.

Miss Alison having in some degree recovered herself, was gently laid on a sofa, while Maclandreth was busily employed in attending

to her aged father, who was not, however, very long in becoming himself again.

All the strange feelings that had been gathering around, and pent up in Maclandreth's bosom, found vent in a flood of tears. He wept long and passionately. His tears were, however, but the contents of what had for the last few hours, which appeared to him as years, so beclouded the firmament of his happiness. The apprehensions of losing Alison, which he considered the only thing that could intervene between him and the perpetual sunshine of bliss, were now fast vanishing before the beaming satisfaction that played around her and her father's countenances.

Encouraged by what had passed between them, he stammered out, in a few broken sentences, a proposal to accompany them to their destination. This proposal also, awkward as it was, embodied an humble request that he might take up his abode with them, at least for a few weeks, till he should form a more definite plan as to his future course.

His proposal having been accepted, and the request complied with, he was overwhelmed

with joy. He again and again expressed how grateful he was for such an act of kindness.

"It is but meet," replied Mr. Acehambur, "that we should thus endeavour to requite your more than kindness to us. We can never make enough of you, Mr. Maclandreth. I feel already that your proposal to accompany us has opened a new channel for the overflowing affection of my heart towards you. It has touched a cord, of which I knew not until now that this shattered instrument (applying his hand to his heart) was possessed. I feel as if it had moved the spring that set all its melodies in motion. I feel as if my younger days had returned. Methinks I see Mr. Percy in your every movement." He shook violently, and seemed much affected.

Mr. Maclandreth did not know how to reply to such an overflowing gratitude. He had never before witnessed such intensity of love and flow of soul. He stood spell-bound, riveted to the spot. When he rose from his seat he thought of speaking; when he could not, he determined to pace the room; but when, to his confusion, he found that he could

do neither, he sank on the chair, hid his face with both hands, laying his elbows on the table. He was silent, and evidently in agony of mind, but it was such agony as few minds are capable of realizing—agony, because he feared that his affections were but callous, and his gratitude but a vain show, when compared with the more ardent affections and the more real gratitude of his aged patron and friend. Happily for poor Maclandreth, while he was thus bitterly accusing himself of ingratitude, though, in reality, the reverse was the case, the sagacity and experience of Mr. Acehambur perceived in his very confusion the intensity of his gratitude, and in his very silence the unspeakable greatness of his love.

Supper being announced, the conversation became more free and general. Miss Alison became quite talkative, proposing to go herself to take another place in the coach for Mr. Maclandreth, that they might enjoy his company during their journey. Maclandreth was in raptures. He appeared as if he had just found his own natural father and sister after a long and painful separation—such was his free, un-

reserved demeanour. Nor were they indeed less free and open in their dealings with him. Each read his own happiness in the countenance of the other. Their joy was as unconfined as the air they breathed—as natural as the heaving of the chest and the act of respiration—as pure in its nature as innocence and love themselves.

Mr. Acehambur having in a comprehensive and pathetic prayer acknowledged the temporal and especially the spiritual blessings so graciously bestowed upon them, making particular reference to their meeting with Mr. Maclandreth, they parted with each other for the night.

Miss Alison, however, was called aside by her father, and gently reproved for her imprudence in speaking so much about getting Mr. Maclandreth's company on the coming day.

"You must consider," continued he, "that you are but a mere girl, seventeen years of age, whereas he is a young man in his twentieth year, in the bloom of life. He is full blown in the flower of his age, you only in the bud. You must now be more careful how you speak."

"Why, he saved my life. If it had not been for him, you would have no child, papa."

"It is true, he had been made instrumental to save your life, but you should not, on that account, become foolish."

"Suppose, then, papa, that we could not get a place for him inside, why then I should go with him on the outside, and then you would have plenty of room to stretch your stiff leg, for you know very well, when you keep it long in the same position, it becomes quite painful. We must treat him as a gentleman, you know, because he is going to live with us—mustn't we?" looking tenderly into his face, as if to elicit a favourable reply.

He looked thoughtful. She could not construe his meaning—was obliged to retire to rest, more dissatisfied than otherwise at his mysterious conduct.

The very leaving of his company, however, seemed to restore her to that of Maclandreth, for she could not doubt but that they were one in spirit, and that the most delicious of all communion—that of the heart and spirit—was mutual. Mr. Acehambur had now leisure to

think more calmly of what that mysterious evening had revealed. His thoughts recurred to his having promised to take Mr. Maclandreth with him. Then he pondered what might be the probable issue of such an engagement. He was an entire stranger. He knew nothing of his connexions. He might, for aught he knew, be a runaway vagabond. Then he would correct himself for his having for one moment harboured such a thought of the deliverer of his dearest Alison. He thought himself that their meeting must be of God, since the circumstances by which they were brought together could not be so ordered by any other being.

"Alison," he again muttered to himself, "is very young and inexperienced, and seems much attached to him. Poor girl, she knows but little of the grief in which her joy may end." Here he chid himself, saying, "Why should I be always looking on the dark side? He is a good man, and his steps seem to me ordered by the Lord. I will not murmur. Thy will be done." Having again bent his aged knees before God, he sank into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

“ ————— Ah, thou art still
The same soft creature, in whose lovely form
Virtue and beauty seemed as if they tried
Which should exceed the other. Thou hast got
That brightness all around thee that appeared
An emanation of the soul, that loved
To adorn its habitation with itself,
And in thy body was like light, that looks
More beautiful in the reflecting cloud
It lives in.”

RICHARD LALOR SHEIL.

NOTWITHSTANDING the confusion of the preceding night, Mr. Acehambur and Alison were up at their usual time, and had nearly concluded their morning devotion before Mr. Maclandreth had made his appearance. The confusion with which he entered the room, and the efforts by which he endeavoured to conceal his joy, at again meeting with Miss Acehambur, were too visible to pass unnoticed. Nor, indeed, did she make any secret of hers. Her face crimsoned at her own happiness—as little could her undisguised nature hide it, as the darkness

of a room can hide a burning taper placed in its centre.

Mr. Acehambur observed with satisfaction, their mutual delight, and saw in Maclandreth, a kind and faithful guardian for his beloved Alison when he should be no more. In a few days, they were happily settled in their new residence. To give a full and just description of this delightful spot is next to impossibility. It stood on a small eminence, commanding on the one side, the view of an extensive and fruitful valley where nature and art seemed to vie with each other in exhibiting their choicest treasures, and in mutually lavishing the well-earned rewards of industry. The other side, wearied the eye by its unmitigated sterility. The pulseless repose of the mountains towering on high, assumed the aspect of an unconquerable union, heightened by their massiveness into a terrific grandeur. From one of these rocks, there issued a murmuring rivulet; which, after it had watered the garden and a well-cultivated field, that faced the door of the house, emptied itself into a small lake that couched beneath the declivity

upon which this delightful cottage stood. It seemed as if nature had embellished it by bringing into one small spot a specimen of every variety of which she is possessed. It was every way suited to the taste of a pious and contemplative mind. It was the very image of tranquillity and repose:—so quiet that the very spirit of devotion seemed to be ever present with its inhabitants—so calm that the silent voice of conscience was tremblingly listened to—so holy that Heaven's children alone dwelt there; for I was told, upon good authority, that the servants and all about the house were chosen from among the most pious that could be found.

Many were the delightful hours that Ambrose Maclandreth and Miss Acehambur spent in rambling over the rocks, or pleasantly conversing under the refreshing shades of some ancient tree, with which many a legend stood connected in their memory as having been authentically related to them by some of the old servants, whose veracity could not be doubted, since they themselves had seen more things than one near that spot. One of these stories has so much of the marvellous and the pathetic in

it, that not to insert it would be an injustice to the reader of these pages. The subject of this short narrative was a young man of great personal attraction, the son of a Nonconformist Minister, who, with several of his flock, during the time that persecution raged on the Continent, had sold all that they possessed in order that they might take refuge in this quiet nook in the Principality. After a few years of severe labour, the father died. The son, being a devoted youth, and much attached to his father's sentiments, was duly elected by the unanimous voice of the church and congregation as his successor. It was soon discovered that he possessed talents of the first order, even superior in some respects to those of his father. He was much more eloquent. This, however, was the sentiment of the younger portion of the flock. The older members, who had been accustomed for years to see the same personification of calmness filling the pulpit, to sing the same sweet hymn, to be soothed by the constant repetition, under the name of variety, of the same prayer, and quite sent off from the toils and sorrows of

earth—not to heaven, 'tis true, but to a place close at hand, the happy world of forgetfulness—by the very same delightful and profitable discourse from Sabbath to Sabbath—thought the young man rather shallow and flowery, forgetting that the deepest and finest soil yields the best harvest. His new way of explaining the sacred volume they called a mere rhapsody of words. His fine fancy they smiled at as an airy speculation, and his exquisite delineation of characters was regarded as personalities. But heedless of these ungenerous and unjust remarks, he toiled on in his Master's vineyard; knowing that every breath lessened the distance between him and the glorious reward that awaited his unworthy labours. This spirit of dissension among the members of the church was, however, but as the roar of the wind, which was soon to be lost in the fury of the tempest that was about to break in upon the hitherto comparative tranquillity, of his very successful ministerial career. On his entering the ministry, he had taken up his abode with the acting deacon of the church, and the pretended friend of his

father. This gentleman's lady was his second bride, and considerably younger in years than himself. Here was a severe test for a well-favoured youth, especially when we remember that, amongst the Nonconformists, a deaconess or a she-patron is the compass on which the minister is to keep his steadiest look, her eye, the needle whose significant movements are to be narrowly watched; for a mistake here is fatal—her smile, the serene heaven that promises a prosperous voyage—the contraction of her brow, the louring of the weather that announces the approaching storm—her frown, utter destruction. At first her attentions were received as tokens of Christian love and the overflowings of a generous heart. After awhile she grew more bold, and became devotional even to affectation. He could not take a walk, or visit the flock without her being fast by his side. Dark hints, which to the poor youth were dark indeed, were thrown out respecting the callous disposition of her husband, and that their marriage was a queer affair altogether; that it was brought about more by her father's good opinion of him than in

consequence of any tender feeling cherished by herself, and that indeed she never did nor could love him, pretending to dry a forced tear that stood in her lustful eye. To follow the whole process by which this crafty tempter tried to compass her end, and satiate her insatiable desires, under the garb of religious pretensions, as still current among the old people, would be neither profitable nor becoming. It will be a relief to the reader to learn that this faithful Minister of Christ nobly sustained the conflict and achieved the victory. But her disappointment was most keenly felt, and the thought of living in his presence was excruciating beyond endurance. She now began to hate him with a perfect hatred. The faithfulness of his preaching was intolerable. He did not preach the Gospel. He was a notorious liar, and proverbial for his loose habits with the weaker sex. Her husband's ears were filled with reports of his attacks upon her honour. He, duped by the fairness of her speech and tenderness of her caresses, became almost frantic with rage; yet he did not, like an honest man, openly attack this un-

fortunate youth; but at the suggestion of his wife and son, who, of course, felt much for his mother, for he was his mother's child with respect to his outward shape and inward obliquity, and had no more of his father, either within or without him, than his mother's heart had. By this time his chapel had become crowded to excess. This auspicious sign was hailed by our youthful evangelist as an omen for good. He clearly saw that his usefulness and popularity would greatly increase. Little did he conjecture that such a lovely day breeds, or, at any rate, brings forth to active life more snakes, vipers, adders, scorpions, &c., than a thousand wintry days. The natural and the spiritual seemed to him full of promise.

Within three weeks from this time, he was to make the most pious and the most wealthy lady in the neighbourhood his bride. He thought that heaven smiled on conscience, and that his concealed integrity was about to be rewarded openly. After the course of nature, the sun of his life had not as yet obtained its meridian; but, as it afterwards proved, its orb of light was full. Its wane had begun. Tri-

bulation and anguish were at hand. The horrid invention hatched by his vile host, and more than vile hostess, was now to become his. They accused him of circulating false notes. They had him taken up and brought before the magistrates. On being questioned by them, he boldly denied the charge, and offered them all his keys in order that his boxes might be searched. His host seemed much pleased with his frankness, and said that he would willingly stake his charge on that experiment, and that if nothing was found in his boxes to warrant his allegation, he would gladly withdraw what had been said. The searching of his desk, however, produced his death warrant, for a large roll of notes was found amongst his other papers, answering exactly to the one produced by his merciless host. The agonies of his mind at this discovery exceeded the power of description. His doom was sealed—his fate irreversibly.

The period of his imprisonment, he is said to have borne with patience and fortitude, manifesting the most forgiving disposition, and often earnestly praying that God would turn

the hearts of his persecutors to confess his innocence. But his keenest pangs were felt on account of the young lady to whom he was to be married, and upon whom his present situation had brought such a reproach. In whatever light others regarded his unparalleled persecution, she was unremitting in her attention to him and proved the depth of her love by her inestimable sympathy with the sufferings which so much sanctity was destined to endure. Night and day she watched over him, and cheered his drooping spirit, removing every obstacle that lay in the way of his complete resignation to his fate, and by her angelic presence throwing a bright light around the shores of eternity; reminding him of his approaching end, when every cause of sorrow would be removed, and a state of perfect happiness enjoyed. Often, while he was cast down, would she say to him—"Do not despond, dearest, God is your refuge, and He is your very present help in this time of trouble. Can we suppose, my dearest, that He will suffer the plants of His right-hand planting, nourished in His Church, the garden of His holiness, watered with the

dew of his grace, invigorated by the beams of his smiling countenance, to be plucked for a fuel to consume the implacable enemies of virtue, when the precious bud is about to flower in surpassing beauty and eternal bloom, fit to grace with its loveliness, to please with its inimitable delicacy, and to perfume with its fragrance the most hallowed place in the universe, the immediate presence of Him who is the source of all beauty and fountain of all goodness." Such was the language of this unequalled beauty. Her whole soul was one burning flame of love which nothing could quench. Her mental agony and bodily exertions, however, at length, weakened her delicate constitution, and symptoms of approaching dissolution began to appear. The intensity of her love heralded her fate. So rapid did inward grief proceed with its work, that three days before his execution, while kneeling by his side, her pure soul fled to God, whence it came. Thus did she go before him to the skies, where he was so soon to meet her to renew their love, and to be eternally in each other's society, celebrating the marriage supper

of the Lamb, where injustice cannot prevail and hypocrisy is unknown. This was an answer to their prayers, for their great desire was, that as all hope of their earthly union had been taken away, they should be permitted to leave this vale of tears together, and together enter their everlasting rest. His anxiety on her account was now at an end. His own fate was certain. He felt conscious that the realities of the unknown world were about to burst upon his mental vision. Death, though clad in his most ignominious garb, was to him the gate of eternal life. To have a faithful friend that would have rescued his memory from a fate far more terrible than oblivion, would have greatly tended to mitigate the severity of his passion. But, like Job, he was forsaken by all, and accounted, even by those that had professed the greatest attachment to him, as a vile hypocrite and heartless villain. The days of his mourning were now nearly over. The bitterness, resulting from the treachery of his former friends, sweetened the thought of so soon joining a society of real friends, all bearing the same resemblance to the Friend that loveth at all

times, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, as his lovely betrothed did, and as he was about to bear.

The last two days of his life, he spent in drawing up a sketch of the life and character of this heroic young lady, whose memory was, to him at least, next in preciousness to that of his Saviour Christ. While thus employed, he seemed to have the sharer of his joys and sorrows still with him. About twelve at night, the last night he was ever to witness, for there is no night in Heaven, the night prior to his execution, he finished the pleasing task, which had been to him a fountain of real pleasure; cheering with its living streams the neighbourhood of death. His sleep, during the rest of the night, was the most tranquil of his life. He knew that he closed his eye-lids for the last time to be opened in a world of sin and sorrow. Few were the eye-lids in the same neighbourhood, over which the god of sleep reigned that night. The following day was to usher in an event, never to be forgotten. Innocency was to expire while treachery flourished. The morning of that day, this youthful martyr

spent in praying for his persecutors, and commanding with the most intense earnestness the little flock, over which he had for a short period presided, to the care of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. As the appointed hour drew nigh, the vicinity of the prison was densely crowded, all anxious to obtain the last sight of the person, and hear the accent of the voice of the unfortunate young minister. At length the prison bell began to toll. The flush of expectation became still more intense. Nothing could exceed the thrill of horror which his appearance created through the whole vast assembly. Every heart shuddered — every visage turned pale — every eye became a fountain of water — every lip quivered — every limb trembled — every voice was hushed. The innocent object of all this extraordinary feeling was alone unmoved. The venerable chaplain who stood by wept like a child. His voice was stifled with emotions that could not struggle out in utterance, or shape themselves into expression. He embraced with affection his young friend for the last time, and without waiting to see the end, left the place. The dying

man declared his innocence—prayed with the assembly—besought God to protect the flock over which he was once a shepherd—implored Divine forgiveness for his enemies—said, with a firm voice, “O Father, receive my spirit,” and was launched into the presence of his God to receive the reward of the faithful labourer in His vineyard. The feelings of the multitude can be more easily conceived than described. When the music of his voice had died upon their ears, and when they saw him, at the same time, in the agony of death, one piercing shrill cry of pity, mingled with indignation, seemed to reach the throne of the eternally Just One, calling aloud for vengeance on the perpetrators of such unparalleled cruelty.

Such stories as these were often the subjects upon which these lovers were wont to converse. They found that while sympathising with the fate of the unfortunate lovers of other days, their attachment to each other was increased,—their hearts expanded in love towards all the good; while the bad became more revolting than ever in their eyes. The sentimentalism produced by these legends was with them puri-

fied by the hallowed influence of religion : they were living monuments of what refinement earthly love is capable, when allied to heavenly-mindedness. Their time rolled on in a perfect dream of happiness, for in all their intercourse with each other they had nothing of a painful character to reflect upon : their love, however, had still so much of the earthly as not to be beyond the sorrows attendant on the vicissitudes of life. Whatever sorrow the unknown future might have in store for them *here*, one thing they were certain of, that *hereafter* would be full of joys, unembittered by any such apprehensions. As their attachment resulted from circumstances of no ordinary character, so was the affectionate sentiment they cherished towards each other: it is not, therefore, to be expected that its progress and consummation will be wholly unattended by the extraordinary—it cannot entirely lose its identity. Mr. Acehambur's keen perception could not fail to discover the intensity of their attachment; but he was far from regarding their love with severity. He was indeed delighted with their society. His health became

much improved, and the buoyancy of his spirit returned. He felt, to use his own expression, his strength renewed like the eagle's. Nor can we wonder at the change, when we consider that nothing can more successfully dispel the gloom of old age than having a constant intercourse with the young. Nothing can be more obvious than the truthfulness of this assertion. Youth cannot sympathise with old age; the latter can and does involuntarily sympathise with the former: old feelings return—former joys come back to the heart, like long-lost friends, with smiling faces and buoyant steps, and make the old house ring with mirth and jollity. Thus childhood, youth, and manhood are lived over again, and all accompanied sensations of innocent joys, youthful aspirations, and manly feelings, arrest the devastating progress of the many ills attendant on our exit from this earthly tabernacle.

Mr. Maclandreth had now been under Mr. Acehambur's roof for nearly five months, but had not as yet been able to muster up courage enough to introduce to him the subject of their marriage, though he had once and again re-

solved to do so. Seeing, however, that the longer he delayed the more formidable became the obstacles that lay in his way, he summoned up all his courage, and determined to wait no longer. When, therefore, he entered Mr. Acehambur's presence, he showed a countenance more in sorrow than in anger, as we may well imagine; for he was so nervous that he did not know where to place hand or foot, and so uneasy that no chair in the room could hold him. At length, with a faltering voice, he stammered out—

“I came here, Sir, to—to—to speak—to—to you, in relation to—in relation to Miss Ace—Acehambur.”

He could go no farther: many were the blunders he made; nor were they much bettered by his attempts to correct them.

Mr. Acehambur kindly relieved him by giving him to understand that he knew what his errand was and that he would think of it. Mr. Maclandreth was intoxicated with delight at the kind manner in which he had been received. His heart was bounding with joy as he once and again uttered Miss Alison's name, and that

of the kindest of all parents, Mr. Acehambur.

Having conferred with Alison, Mr. Aceham-
bur called him in, and gave him to understand
all that passed between him and Alison.

The day of their marriage was now fixed.
All being done to his satisfaction, Mr. Maclan-
dreth was scarcely himself. He walked lordly
about the room, uttering big words, saying that
he was *highly* and *most exceedingly* pleased with
the manner in which all things had been *so*
duly and *wisely* arranged, &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.”

COWPER.

THE STORY OF AGNES JACOB.

Taken from a Sketch of her Life, drawn up by her Intended, the Rev. Isaac Bransby, a short time before his Execution.

“AGNES JACOB was born in Poland. Her father was a wealthy Jew: Her mother, however, though a professed Israelite, was at heart a Christian, having been brought up in a Christian family in Switzerland. The father took great pains to instruct his only child in the principles of the Jewish religion.

“His hatred to the Christian religion and his spite against the Nazarene knew no bounds. He delighted in teaching the infant lips of his

child to curse him. The mother was far otherwise inclined, and secretly did all she could towards counteracting the father's influence over the mind of her child. She was at first very timid and apprehensive, lest the child should unconsciously betray her real sentiments. But as her mind began to expand itself, the mother's anxiety increased lest a wrong bias given to her thoughts at that tender age should fix her father's principles too firmly in her heart. In this dilemma, she fixed upon a plan, which she knew the father would highly approve, and which would, at the same time, eventually secure the end she had in view. Her scheme proposed thoroughly to ground the child in all the prophecies respecting the Great Deliverer who was to rescue the seed of Jacob from their present degraded condition. The father was highly gratified at what he considered her devotedness to his principles, and her desire to instil them into the mind of her child, while she, on the other hand, was equally pleased with the hope of turning the whole to a very different purpose. While endeavouring to cultivate the tender mind com-

mitted to her care, she found that her own soul was becoming more and more attached to the religion of Jesus Christ. She felt that the instruction imparted to the child became her own support and comfort. So true did she find the promise, "He that watereth others, shall be watered himself," that her soul daily rejoiced in God her Saviour. At length Agnes became her mother's confidant. The spirit of her dear mother found its way with the instructions conveyed into her heart. At this juncture a circumstance occurred which greatly relieved their anxieties. The father was called from home, and his absence, in consequence of various and unexpected changes in his projects, was prolonged, and he did not return for nearly eighteen months. During this interval Agnes and her mother carefully read the four Gospels, and both determined, in the strength of God, to break their minds to Agnes's father, and come what would, to make a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. Upon a maturer consideration, however, knowing the pain that the disclosure would give him, they came to the determination of concealing all from him.

for the space of one month, and then to tell him the result of their inquiries, and the conclusion to which their impartial examination of the Prophecies had led them. On his return home, the father felt very unwell, in consequence of his having had a damp bed during his absence. Mrs. Jacob, however, did all she could to cheer and comfort him, and little Agnes was unremitting in her attention. Nor were they, both parent and child, less constant and earnest in their secret prayers on his behalf. In addition to his bodily weakness he had an unusual gloom, accompanied with great irritability of temper. This uneasiness was too settled, and accompanied with feelings of too melancholy a character, to be wholly accounted for by reason of his declining health.

"It was now evident to all that knew him that he was in a rapid decline, and would not long survive. One day, while labouring under his great exhaustion of spirit, he said to his daughter:—

"‘Agnes, my love, would you like to go to school? I have been thinking of a school, which is kept by a very dear friend of mine,

whom I met in Switzerland during my absence from home. But perhaps you would not like to go to him, because he is a Christian. Notwithstanding that, he is a very good man, and his wife an excellent lady. Would you like to go, love?

"Agnes, in consequence of being forewarned by her mother of her papa's craftiness, did not know what to say, and burst into tears. Seeing that her tears grieved her parent, she left the room to seek counsel of her mother. Having told her all that occurred, they did not know what to do; the one was as surprised and timid as the other: they were not, however, ignorant of the way to the Searcher of all hearts, and to Him they repaired to seek the direction necessary in this their time of need. Nor were they disappointed; for they rose from their knees, fully persuaded that God had heard their prayers on his behalf, and opened his heart to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. They now agreed that Agnes should enter the room first, and begin to talk of the school which he mentioned, when her mother was accidentally to come in and join their conversa-

tion. This plan at once succeeded in giving him an opportunity to open his mind, and to disclose the cause of his constant grief. Indeed, plans suggested while in prayer, and asking direction from God, never fail to accomplish the end we desire to secure. The attention paid by Mrs. Jacob and Agnes to what he said, encouraged him to disclose to them the source of his uneasiness. He began by telling them that on his journey he met with a Swiss gentleman who entered into a long argument with him on the evidence of the Christian religion.

" 'We travelled together,' he said, 'for nearly four months, and I never saw him once out of temper during the whole time. I made it a point, for the first seven weeks, to provoke him to anger by cursing the Nazarene and his deluded followers. All this he bore with an unexampled patience. Every day seemed to heighten his piety and love. His whole demeanour was a decided proof that the more I annoyed him, the more earnest he appeared in endeavouring to overcome my prejudices. One evening, after I had abused him to my heart's

content, and concluded my ribaldry with calling him a credulous simpleton, with a countenance full of anxiety, and an eye beaming with hope, notwithstanding all my hardness of heart and unbelief, he said to me:—

“ ‘ Mr. Jacob, I was once just such an one as yourself; I mean, as it respects my temper. Had you offered to me but ten years ago the thousandth part of the insult that I have quietly received from you for the last seven weeks, either you or myself would have been no more. But the religion which you so despise has wrought this mighty change in me. It has indeed changed the lion of sinful nature into an innocent lamb of Christ’s flock.

“ ‘ I am, Mr. Jacob, a follower of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, the Nazarene whom you so often curse, forgetting that the mad prayer of your ancestors—“ Let his blood be upon us and upon our children ”—has made you what you really are, a monument of the Divine displeasure; but I earnestly hope, not yet irrecoverably lost. It is the thought that you are still within the reach of mercy that has hitherto encouraged

me to bear with, and pray for you, regardless of your contempt for me, believing that Christ is able to melt even your hard heart, and to subdue your stubborn spirit.'

"Here Mr. Jacob burst into tears, his wife and child wept with him; their sympathy seemed to lighten his burden and encourage his heart. He then said, that that very night he most keenly felt that he too needed the change of which that man spoke.

"'When I went to bed,' he continued, 'I began to reflect upon what had passed between us, and for the first time in my life, I thought of the power requisite to change my heart, or the heart of my friend, which was, I believe, really changed. Having always been taught to look for the promised Deliverer as a Conqueror, I thought that I had seen in my friend that night, the evidence of a conquest far more worthy of the Prince of Peace, promised in the Hebrew Scriptures, than any earthly achievement could have produced. Here was triumph over mind. And it flashed like lightning upon me, that the kingdom of this promised Messiah must be strictly

spiritual in its nature, and that it is here that our great mistake as a nation was made. We mistake the nature of His kingdom, and of the deliverance He came to effect. In addition to this, I have carefully read the New Testament, a copy of which he kindly gave me as a parting gift.'

"Here he ordered Agnes to bring to him the small case that lay locked on his dressing-table. Having opened it, he took out the precious volume, and fervently kissed it, while the tears coursed down his pale and sunken cheek, exclaiming, in a transport of joy :—

"'In this book I have found what none but God in Christ can give. Through its instrumentality, I have found that great deliverance which Jesus Christ came into the world to effect—a deliverance from sin, the enemy of my soul, and the possession of eternal life, which makes my present declining health appear to my soul as it really is—not worthy to be compared with the joy which awaits me; being made by God's grace to work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Having sat up in bed during this transport of

hallowed delight, when he uttered the word "glory,"—and that with an emphasis that seemed to contain too much sanctity to have fallen from earthly lips,—he fell back on the pillow, and without a groan, while the same holy smile remained on his countenance, his enraptured soul was carried by angels into his Saviour's bosom.

"The joy and grief which pervaded the hearts of the widow and the orphan, at this moment, can never be expressed: joy, because of the testimony that he bequeathed to them of his having been saved from eternal damnation, by the blood of Christ, and that, as they both firmly believed, in answer to their prayers: grief, because he was taken from them when his life had become doubly dear to them, by the sweet promise his conversion held out of their increase of earthly joy and spiritual enjoyment, and that he was taken away before they could tell him that his Saviour was theirs likewise, and they had prayed without ceasing for his conversion.

"When all the respect that love could pay to his earthly remains had been shown, Mrs.

Jacob became exceedingly low and dejected. Little Agnes, though still a child, had learned enough of God's word to enable her to comfort her dear mother in her present despondency. Often would she, with a child-like simplicity, and what was still better, a child-like confidence in her Heavenly Father, direct her mother to seek comfort in that God who had already befriended them in their prayers, in saving the soul of the departed one, and who still promised to be the husband of the widow and the father of the fatherless. Such entire resignation manifested by the child, was a timely rebuke to the mother's murmuring spirit against God's providence. One day as they were reading together in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, they came to the Lord's Prayer, and as Mrs. Jacob read the words, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' Agnes turned a mournful look on her mother, and said :—

" ' I think this will suit your case.'

" ' What do you mean, child ?' rejoined the mother.

" ' Why,' continued Agnes, somewhat con-

fused, ‘ I do not think, dear mamma, that you have forgiven God for taking away papa, though he took him to Heaven, where we shall meet him again.’

“ ‘ Agnes, my dear child,’ cried the mother, clasping the little one to her bosom, ‘ you have rescued your dear mother from this sinful course of rebelling against Heaven. I will murmur no more, but quietly submit to the correction of my Heavenly Father. Oh,’ she continued, pressing Agnes to her heart, ‘ how can I be grateful enough to God for giving me such a treasure in my beloved child! I have no will of my own now, I am quite willing to be led by my God, trusting that in the end we shall both arrive at our Father’s house in peace.’

“ From this instant Mrs. Jacob became a cheerful and happy Christian. It is, indeed, when we are most child-like that we are most happy. Religion’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.

“ Having settled their worldly affairs, both mother and child removed to Switzerland, in order to be among Christian friends, and to bid farewell for ever to their old Jewish ac-

quaintance. On their arrival there, they were kindly received by the gentleman who was made the instrument of Mr. Jacob's conversion to Christianity. The letters which this worthy person had written to Mr. Jacob, he regarded as sacred credentials of their claim on his protection. Nor were these defenceless, innocent creatures disappointed in their hope of his continuing to be their protector and friend to the last. He devoted much of his time to their worldly affairs. Nor did he overlook their spiritual interests. He took the first opportunity of introducing them to his brother's family, who was the clergyman of the district in which their lot was now fixed. In this worthy clergyman, the mild and the stern was singularly blended. This rare quality made him easy of access, while it imparted peculiar weight to his counsels. He was, in every respect, the revered as well as the beloved pastor. He had seen much of the world, and had well profited by his experience.

"The society of such a man was highly advantageous to Mrs. Jacob at this particular juncture. While opening her mind to him with

freedom, she felt herself bound to follow his advice, however contrary that advice might be to her own less penetrating views. Nor was this connexion less profitable for Agnes. It gave her an opportunity of improving her mind by associating with the well-instructed children of this new friend and counsellor. Agnes was placed with them in the school mentioned by her late father, and which was kept by this clergyman's brother's wife. Both mother and daughter were now in their element; they felt that they had all that their hearts could wish. All their past trials were forgotten in the enjoyment of the present. The present and the future smiled upon them. They deemed themselves the happiest beings upon the face of the earth. Their hearts overflowed with gratitude to that Being who brought them in safety to this happy place, and gave them such favour in the sight of His people. The school in which Mrs. Jacob had placed Agnes, was conducted according to the golden rules of our happy ancestors.

“ All the children got their lessons ready at home, and then went to the master or mistress,

simply for the purpose of repeating them, and getting all the explanation requisite for their thoroughly understanding them, and for the greater facility in acquiring as well as comprehending them. In those happy days, our good and kind-hearted forefathers had no notion of cooping up their children for a whole day together, as if the poor innocents had been the most rebellious of their species, instead of being the objects of more than ordinary care. Such an arrangement gave Mrs. Jacob a peculiar advantage in bringing up her child after what she considered the best manner. It is impossible to conceive the happiness they constantly found in each other's society. Their outward comforts and inward peace, turned their dwelling into a paradise, in which every innocent diversion of which nature is capable, had its time and place; where every hallowed enjoyment which religion is calculated to afford, was always found; and in which the peace of God which passeth all understanding, was the welcome guest whose presence sweetened all other things.

"Agnes was by this time on the eve of

womanhood, and her mother of course could not be insensible to her charms, nor was she as wrong in her conjectures, as some have doubtlessly often been, in thinking that all others were as much struck with her charms as herself. This made her somewhat cautious, lest her fair flower should be blighted by the uncongenial atmosphere that some ungodly youth might bring with him to their hitherto tranquil abode. She made up her mind, therefore, to keep no company except that of the clergyman and his family, together with that of his brother, and his family. Things rolled on much in the same easy way for several months longer, till at length their religious intercourse and worship were so disturbed, that they made up their minds to go together to England, and settle there till things would assume a more favourable aspect. Having arrived in this country, they were quite at a loss to know where to fix their abode. They resolved, however, not to settle anywhere till they should find a place exactly suitable to the object they had in view. For this purpose they went through all England, Scotland, and

Ireland. The result of their tour was anything but satisfactory. They were, therefore, on the point of emigrating to America, and form a colony of their own. While they were still wavering, they were told of a small estate on the borders of Wales, which was to be disposed of as soon as possible. This gave them an opportunity of making a new excursion. The place was all they wanted, and though in the Principality, the English language, of which they were complete masters, was not chiefly spoken by the inhabitants, Mrs. Jacob, by the advice of her friends, bought the whole estate, and had an immediate possession. Being so few in number, they had at first all things in common, until a better arrangement could be made. The old mansion, where nothing but the sound of revelry had been heard, was now filled with the voice of praise and thanksgiving. The formal manner in which things were conducted in the parish church, disgusted them, and the immorality of the priest, made them tremble for the safety of true religion. For awhile they worshipped together after their own custom, having selected one of the rooms of

the old mansion for that purpose. Several of the neighbours being led there, perhaps at first from curiosity, at length became constant in their attendance. This compelled them to remove to a larger room. They now felt that their prospect of being useful among the inhabitants would fully justify an attempt to erect a small Meeting House for the accommodation of their increased number. This plan being executed, the little Tabernacle, for so it was named, was publicly dedicated to God in a solemn and appropriate manner, by making that day a season of general rejoicing and thanksgiving among the few interested in the completion of the work. The happiness of Mrs. Jacob and her venerable friend, the old clergyman, was boundless. They felt satisfied that their settling there was of the Lord. There were other reasons, also, why they should congratulate each other on the happy issue of their wanderings, namely, the love that existed between young Isaac Bransby, the only son of the old pastor, and the youthful Agnes. This was an event for which both parents had long wished and prayed. How mysterious the ways

of Providence! Under these auspicious circumstances commenced that love whose tragical end we have already noticed."

CHAPTER VIII.

"How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest !
When Spring with dewy fingers cold
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

"By fairy hands their knell is rung ;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung :
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay ;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there."

COLLINS.

ONE evening as Mr. Maclandreth was returning from C——, with his head full of projects, and his imagination conjuring up images too ethereal in their nature to be inherited by flesh and blood, he was suddenly attacked by a short, strong, and muscular man, who peremptorily demanded all that he had, or else—dropping his voice as he uttered the last word, he took out of his pocket a pistol. Startled by this discovery, Maclandreth rushed upon him, and a severe contest ensued. They both fell together: Maclandreth, however, from his

superior knowledge of the place succeeded in pushing his opponent into a large ditch that lay at the side of the road. This being done, he hastened to recover his club, but was soon reminded of his folly by a heavy blow inflicted by the innocent weapon which, dexterously wielded by his antagonist, sent him reeling to the ground. While thus gasping for breath, he accidentally laid his hand on the pistol which had been lost during the first struggle. Conscious of this advantage, he sprang upon his feet, seized the robber, and pointing the fatal instrument to his head, threatened his destruction. Seeing that resistance was useless, the threatening voice of the assailant was changed into the suing whine of the suppliant. But Maclandreth would not allow him to kneel down, nor implore his forgiveness, asserting that he had no right to pardon him, that he had put himself in the grasp of the law; that he must take him into the first house that could be found, and there remain with him till information should be given to the next magistrate, who would see that justice should be done to him.

Whether Maclandreth intended all that he said is uncertain ; for he afterwards promised, should he confess the truth and give him a full account of himself, to conceal his name and let him go. No sooner had he begun to speak in his natural tone of voice, than the hitherto unrelenting Maclandreth threw away the pistol, and folded him in his arms. The convulsive and half-fainting offender cried out, “ Master Maclandreth ! ” Maclandreth could not say a word ; but assured him of his forgiveness by pressing him the more closely to his bosom, whose heaving could not be mistaken for an affectionate tenderness that effectually declared what the most eloquent language would have failed to express.

Having given vent to his feelings in a flood of tears, which fell copiously upon the cheek of the suppliant, as if they would wash away the stain imprinted on his guilty brow by this ungenerous act, Mr. Maclandreth said, in a voice that might have inspired confidence in the most timid mind :—

“ O Romsdale, Romsdale ! where will thy follies end ? What will become of you ? ”

Here Romsdale interrupted him, sobbing aloud, and declaring that he would not rise without the assurance of his forgiveness. Mr. Maclandreth saw the feeble light of a lantern gradually approaching them, and hastily said to his humble suppliant:—

“I do forgive thee; here are our servants coming to seek for me; go to the next inn, you will find one about a mile from here, and meet me again in this place to-morrow evening, at seven o’clock.”

“I cannot go to an inn,” replied Romsdale, timidly, “I have no money.”

“Take this, then, and be off,” said Maclandreth, as he placed a guinea in his hand.

The light was now hard by. He saw Romsdale taking to his heels with the speed of youth. He hesitated for a moment whether he should discover or conceal himself: the next he was over the hedge in the field, observing with satisfaction that the three nocturnal intruders were three ruffians, by no means proverbial for their honesty, whose salutation he felt happy to have avoided.

The following morning Maclandreth rose

earlier than usual, and bent his way towards the residence of a particular friend of his, whom he knew wanted a clerk in one of his offices, and he thought that such a situation would be all that his friend could wish. Having secured the place, he returned home with a heart bounding with joy at the idea of his being made the means to recover his friend from the vortex of shame and infamy into which he already seemed so deeply sunk.

James Romsdale had been at the place of the previous evening's contest for a considerable time before Maclandreth made his appearance. Had he any feelings, the stillness of a scene so fraught with painful recollections, might have thrown him into a train of reflections that would have produced the most salutary effects upon his mind. But to be serious and to reflect were both alike unknown to him. And if he believed in a state of future retribution, of reward for the righteous, and punishment for the wicked, it was because he could not fix his mind upon the subject long enough to disbelieve it.

When Mr. Maclandreth appeared, he hardly

knew how to address him. This awkward task, however, was dispensed with by the frankness of his friend's salutation. He at once told him of the excellent situation he had obtained for him, and gave him a brief account of his adventures since they had seen each other before. He went over all the trifles that contributed to form his intimacy with Alison and the delightful prospects that lay before him, with a lover's speed and a lover's zest.

The latter clause of this narration, however, did not produce such an effect upon his friend's mind as he could have expected. Not so the former part. All that related to the *excellent situation* went down with infinite relish. The very mention of it had thrown him into ecstacy, and perhaps, to do him justice, for once in his whole life into a reverie; for we cannot suppose that, otherwise, he could be so brutal as not to shew, if not in reality, at least in appearance, some regard to his friend's feelings. But he appeared somehow altogether as an enigma in creation, and a mystery in Providence. Two persons more unlike could not have been thrown together. The one was as

much distinguished for selfishness as the other was for generosity. The love of the one, if he had any, had never roamed from home—never tasted the pleasures of benefitting others—was an ignorant captive that knew nothing beyond the precincts of the self in which it was imprisoned. The love that dilated the bosom of the other knew what it was to do to others as he wished that they should do to him—what was a life filled up with usefulness and wholly consecrated to the good of others—what an immense augmentation happiness receives by communication—with what reverence a little sympathy given to others returns—and what a harvest of delight the seeds scattered by the benevolent will certainly yield.

Mr. Maclandreth, willing to put the best construction upon his conduct, attributed his unusual silence to a reluctance to revert to the ungrateful manner in which he had treated his former kindness; for he had been more than once before laid under great obligations to him.

The next day Mr. Maclandreth introduced him to his new employer, who seemed mightily

pleased with his intelligent and lively appearance. While he was thus paying a thousand little attentions to his friend such as true friendship alone can suggest, the letter-bag belonging to Mr. W.'s works was dropped in by the postman. To have a glance at the newspapers with which the table was almost instantaneously covered, was an opportunity too seasonable to be neglected by young Maclandreth. The first paper that he took up contained the following account. "THE DEATH OF COLONEL MACLANDRETH.—THIS WORTHY PATRIOT CLOSED HIS LONG AND USEFUL LIFE ON MONDAY EVENING LAST. HIS SEVERE ILLNESS WAS BORNE WITH THE FORTITUDE THAT SO LONG CHARACTERIZED HIS BRAVE AND DARING LIFE. We understand that his property is bequeathed to his grandson, Mr. Ambrose Maclandreth. This whimsical youth, we regret to say, has but little of the grandfather about him. A few months ago he suddenly disappeared, and has not yet been discovered. In case that he should not make his appearance, his father, Abraham Henry Maclandreth, Captain of the —— regiment, will properly lay claim to what is left."

The paper fell from his hand as if it had been paralysed. He turned pale, trembled, and fell helplessly into his friend's arms.

"Ambrose, dear Ambrose," exclaimed Romsdale, "what is the matter?"

"My grandfather, my grandfather," uttered Maclandreth, faintly.

"Your grandfather! and what of him?"

Maclandreth thoughtfully looked at the paper again.

Romsdale seized it and read—"The death of ——. We understand that his property is bequeathed to his grandson, Ambrose Maclandreth."

"Bravo! Confound me, Ambrose, you are a gentleman. Are you sorry for it? What ails you? I wish I had a grandfather that would die and leave me such a fortune. Cheer up, my good fellow. You have no need to mar your joy by affecting sorrow before me."

Ambrose gave him such a look as he could not fail to understand.

"I only meant," said he, dropping his voice, "to comfort you."

"Comfort me!" continued Ambrose, empha-

tically. " You are trifling with my best feelings, James; I cannot bear your selfishness. Death in one's family is not a thing to be trifled with. There is a voice in it that sooner or later must be listened to. The shadows of long evening will soon be gathering around us: and even now, strong and healthy as we are, the shadows of death are upon our eyelids, consequently the substance cannot be afar off. Nay, death itself is working in us, for what is man but the working-house of death? The seeds of mortality are thickly sown in our very nature, and the clouds of pestilence and disease have not failed to water them and make them grow. All things seem in confederacy with death, leagued against man, and determined to achieve the triumph of mortality."

" Upon my word, Ambrose, I think you would make a better parson than half those that enter the *wooden cage* and affect the learned and the pious in a black gown. Do not you think so ? "

" James, I am serious: the subject that we are talking about is not to be ridiculed. Our

after-life will take its complexion from the attention that we give it. Death has become the destiny of all living, and since it does not effect any change in the character relative to that Holy Being into whose presence it ushers, it is of the greatest moment that we should understand the relation in which we stand to God as subjects of his moral government, for it is the great repository that contains the destinies of eternity. It is here that the worm that never dies is nourished, and the spark that shall become an unquenchable fire is kept alive ; or that principle which conducts the soul homeward is deposited, and the pure flame that consumes its corruption is fanned by the conflicting nature of the very materials that come in contact with its operation. No sooner, dear James, is the mysterious link that binds together the material and thinking parts of our nature dissolved, than the unclothed spirit becomes conscious of the relationship existing between it and its Maker. It is then that it perceives on the one hand what might have been the glorious rewards of a faithful discharge of the duties arising from such a near relation

to God, and on the other hand, what will be the doom of the unfaithful and the traitor under the government of that righteous Being who will not iustify the wicked."

"Well, Ambrose, I do not see any reason why people so young as we are, should deprive ourselves of the vivacity of youth and the enjoyments, which, if now lost, manhood cannot restore. Let us rather enjoy the present than trouble ourselves with the uncertain future."

"Ah ! my dear James, you are mistaken : there is no enjoyment like that of religion. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are paths of peace. Now is the best period to provide for futurity. It would be a sad thing to be cut from time without the soul being laden with the riches current in eternity. Think, dear friend, of the agitated state into which the unprepared is thrown, by, alas ! the too late discovery of his folly, which will awake the worm never to sleep again ; and, oh ! who can conceive the horrors that seize upon the lost spirit, when it finds itself surrounded by the sublime scenes of eternity, and that infinitude of woe of which it thought too little here on

earth, exposing to its view those various stages of damnation through which it will have to pass, till all the misery that the present hell contains can be lodged in its own bosom."

"O, Ambrose! do not dwell on these melancholy scenes; you terrify me; nor do you, yourself, seem proof against the terror attendant upon such horrible thoughts."

"I do confess that I am perhaps too much disposed to indulge in those gloomy reveries; but it is well to be terrified from the evil, that we may the more closely adhere to the good."

"This may be all very well; but you told me just now, that the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness and that *all* her paths are paths of peace. You now seem to say, that it is well to embitter the sweets of the present by always thinking of a horrible future, into which, despite ourselves, we must enter."

"You misunderstand me; we widely differ in our notions of happiness. You think no bliss can be found apart from worldly pleasures; I think that such baubles can afford no enjoyment to those that have arisen from the grovelling ideas that bind the horizon of the igno-

rant to the high and noble pursuits that expand the capacities and clear the vision of the wise. I am fully persuaded that no man who has ever tasted the exquisite delights of a religious life, can derive the least enjoyment from the vain show of worldly pleasures."

" You speak now like a man; you seem to read my mind in my face. This is the great point that I dislike in religion, that the moment we become professed Christians every comfort is lost, peace and happiness forfeited, and pain, sorrow, and pensive moroseness, supplant the few charms that fair nature is destined to yield. As for myself, I am one of the *Pauline party*, Ambrose. Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. What think you of that, eh?"

Before Mr. Maclandreth could reply to this misconstrued eulogium on his own statement, or remind him of his scriptural inaccuracy, the conveyance was standing at the door ready to receive them. They both entered, and in a few minutes were on the high road to Fairview Cottage.

CHAPTER IX.

"Her eye did seem to labour with a tear
Which suddenly took birth, but, overweigh'd
With its own swelling, dropt upon the bosom,
Which by reflection of her light appear'd.

"As nature meant her sorrow for an ornament,
After her looks grew cheerful, and I saw
A smile shoot gracefully upward from her eyes,
As if they had gained a victory o'er grief."

JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE coach stopped before Mr. Acehambur's door. Miss Alison had for some time been walking in the pleasure-grounds, watching the progress of the vehicle that lessened the distance between her and her faithful lover. She had now repaired into the front parlour, and was breathlessly expecting the first glimpse of her beloved Ambrose. He descended from the carriage, but he was accompanied with a stranger whom she had never, as she thought, seen before. She was disappointed—withdrawn from the window—and when they entered the parlour she was busily engaged in reading a

small volume that lay on her lap. Mr. Maclandreth introduced Romsdale to her as a particular friend of his. Romsdale was now more in his element than when conversing with his *he* friend alone. He regained his usual loquacity, for he was quite at home in the *small talk* line. Alison could not divine what to make of him. His conversation was so frivolous and pointless that she was quite jaded by it. He had however but her ear. Her heart was with Maclandreth. She observed with pain his forced smile, his uneasiness, and the mournful look of his countenance. She could hold no longer, apologized for leaving the room, and by a significant glance at her beloved Ambrose, bade him follow. Sitting by his side, and tenderly pressing his hand between both hers, she anxiously looked in his face. Observing his contracted brow and pensive appearance, she burst into tears, exclaiming :—

“Has poor Alison offended you in anything, dear Ambrose ?”

He looked at her with a tenderness that a female’s love can never fail to understand.

"Beloved Ambrose, forgive me! You still love poor Alison; yes, you still love me. Do you not? O yes; I know you do.

"Unequalled Alison," cried Ambrose, "we must part for—"

"Oh no, never, never!" throwing herself on his bosom.

"Listen to me, and be calm, will you?"

She rose and stalked proudly towards the door. Her limbs could hold their weight no longer, and she fell senseless on the floor. Maclandreth, half maddened with himself, lifted her light frame in his arms. He bathed her beautiful features with burning tears, that copiously flowed from the fiery fountain of devoted affection. When she revived, she said, with a sorrowful countenance and a still more sorrowful tone of voice—

"Now, I am prepared; speak what you have to communicate to me; yes, I am prepared for the worst."

"Do not speak so, dear Alison. You evidently anticipate what I hope will never occur. I saw in the paper this morning that my dear grandfather is dead, and that he has bequeathed

all his property to me, so that I must forthwith proceed to lay claim to it."

"Thank Heaven, that things are not worse! I had some vague apprehensions even before I rose this morning, that our dream of happiness will never be realized, and soon after you left, as I was walking in the garden, a small mouse ran quite along your favourite walk to meet me, and, horrible to relate, the dumb creature actually stared me in the face, and did not seem in the least terrified. How shall I survive your departure? I shall break my heart." And placing her beautiful head on his arm, she fondly gazed on his fine intelligent countenance.

The rest of the day was spent in the necessary preparation for his departure. This gave them some relief from the necessity of having their minds constantly riveted to the approaching trial of parting from each other. Though they were anxious to put the evil hour as far from them as possible, yet neither could for the world refrain from speaking of it, and even though professing to be full of hope, hazard some vague hints of the mournful

possibility of their never meeting again in this vale of tears. To pretend to brave what we most dread, is natural to our present state. What we are most careful to avoid, is invariably uppermost in our thoughts. The little boy, to whom his father had promised a horse if he could repeat the Lord's Prayer without thinking of it, and who, when in the middle of the ordeal, suddenly stopped, and cried out, "Father, shall I have the saddle too?" is a fair specimen of human nature's incapacity to ward off at will the chief object either of dread or of desire. This was exactly the case with these lovers. So overwhelming was its influence on their mind, that they at length sought to relieve their sorrow by conversing on the very subject that produced it. They over and again, with streaming eyes and palpitating hearts, gave expression to their fears lest something should occur to prevent their anticipated union. Mr. Maclandreth felt that it became his duty to assume the man, the counsellor, and the comforter, seeing that he was on the point of being divested, for awhile at least, of the power of being her protector. He tried to soothe her

sorrow and comfort her heart, by expatiating on her remaining comforts, her father's care and protection, the likelihood of his speedy return and the consummation of their projected marriage; and, above all, he endeavoured to direct her to seek comfort from God, the fountain of all happiness, Who was perfectly acquainted with the complexion of every day of their lives, and Who, in answer to prayer, could make all things work together for the realization of their most sanguine expectations. Then they knelt down together, and earnestly supplicated the aid of their Heavenly Father in their present time of need. Thus did these lovely young Christians roll their burden upon the Lord, and He, according to His promise, strengthened their hearts, by imparting a new vigour to their wavering confidence in His fatherly care. They rose from their knees, as they themselves testified, much refreshed and comforted. They embraced each other with less palpitating hearts, feeling a renewed confidence as to the issue of the much-dreaded journey. It was remarkable with what calmness they could now talk of what concerned

their present situation. Alison said that she never felt so happy as when her faith triumphed over the misgivings attendant on the vicissitudes of life.

"Yes," rejoined Mr. Maclandreth, "and there is no time in which our confidence in God seems so precious as when thus enveloped in the darkness by which all finite beings are surrounded with respect to futurity. As for myself, I never feel so happy as when conscious of my utter helplessness. I cling to my Heavenly Father with the simplicity of a child, like the infant that hides its face from danger in its mother's bosom."

"Yes, my dearest Ambrose," exclaimed Alison, "and yet there are some people, and even Christians too, that would think any one that would thus speak of God's fatherly goodness as very simple and soft. I suppose these overgrown disciples, had they been with our Saviour at Bethany, would have thought him somewhat too tender in sympathising so much with the bereaved Sisters. My soul always clings to Him with greater tenacity when I think of His compassion for the weaker vessels.

Had he felt towards them as some unfeeling wretches do, he would have never thought of his Mother when dying upon the cross, neither would he have given her in charge to the beloved John, more than to any of the other disciples, had he not known that he was most like Himself, and would take a good care of her. O how I like the character of John. He is so loving—indeed he scarcely writes about anything else. He is so like you, dear. If you had lived in Christ's time you would have been such a favourite with Him, I am sure."

The degree of ardour and delight manifested in the manner in which these words were uttered quite astonished Mr. Maclandreth. He had never before heard her speak with such freedom and ease. She was naturally of a timid and reserved disposition. He ever before regarded her as a strange anomaly in the history of her sex. What, therefore, must have been his amazement at perceiving his mistake! And who can conceive his delight at finding such a noble intellect concealed under the feminine and modest appearance of his own

dear Alison? Anxious to give her a full scope on the subject, he remarked, that he thought such a disregard to the manifestation of feeling in religious concerns could only arise from spiritual pride and vain-glory.

"Yes," continued Alison, "those who seek by prayer and supplication to be assimilated in all things to the High Priest of their profession—whose heart is made of tenderness—are divided by the *would-be intellectual* Christians, who would have religion adorned by the happiness of earthly wisdom, so as to conceal its real simplicity. How like Christ the conduct of the former! How unlike Him that of the latter! How humble the one, how presumptuous the other! Can earth purify heaven—corruption adorn purity—mortality honour immortality—the speck of time magnify the immensity of eternity—the creature pretend to better the means that the Creator Himself has declared perfect? We should naturally suppose that the blind should be willing to be led by Him that sees—the fallible to be directed by the Infallible—the ignorant to be instructed by the All-wise. With man in

his natural state it is, however, far otherwise. His mind has ever been more captivated by fiction than by truth; by the momentary sight of phantom, than by the grand appearance of reality. Hence it is, that every fiction that has ever laid a strong hold on human belief, is the mistaken image of some great truth—the stream by which the fountain may be traced. Now the proper use of this clue, I look upon as consisting in spiritual humility or implicit reliance on the teaching of the Divine Spirit; for He helpeth our infirmity. And Jesus Christ thanked his Father for having revealed unto babes what was beyond the reach of the wisest of the wise in their own eyes."

"Well done, Alison," cried Ambrose; "I perfectly agree with you? But how is it, my dear, that you have never opened your mind thus to me before? You are really clever, dear."

"Why," replied Alison, full of confusion and awkwardness, "I have never had courage enough to throw off my natural reservedness, even with you, though I love you as my own soul, much less with any other before. I am

very sorry to have done so. I hope you will forgive me, love."

"Forgive you, my own dear Alison? I love you more than ever now. I have always thought you the best of your sex. It shall now be my pride as well as my joy to think you the most intellectual of womankind."

"But O this horrid thought that we are to part, dear Ambrose, comes again, like the ghost of my previous sorrow, and seems as if threatening to erase from the tablets of one's heart this sunniest of hours. In it I have, for the first time in my life, overcome my natural infirmity—that is, the aversion I have to hear my own voice. What makes this conquest still more sacred is, that it was achieved under the sweet influence of the idol of my heart."

Here their sweet converse was interrupted by the return of Mr. Acehambur from town.

CHAPTER X.

‘As onward we journey, how pleasant
To pause and inhabit awhile
Those few sunny spots, like the present,
That ‘mid the dull wilderness smile !
But Time, like a pitiless master,
Cries, ‘Onward !’ and spurs the gay hours ;
And never does Time travel faster,
Than when his way lies among flowers.’

MOORE.

MR. ACEHAMBUR always made his daughter retire to rest at half-past nine o'clock. He and Mr. Maclandreth generally sought repose at ten, having spent half-an-hour together in familiar intercourse on the various occurrences of the day. It was while thus alone with each other, that these faithful friends were accustomed to give vent to the most hidden thoughts of their hearts. Their joys and fears were joint-stock. What the one experienced, the other felt it a privilege to share. And now, both regretted that they should be called to part from each other so suddenly. Though, as

men, they were sorry such was the case, yet they were Christians enough to acquiesce in the ways of Providence, knowing that the very God of Providence was their chief and best friend.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Acehambur to Ambrose (for he was in the habit of calling him so), observing his anxieties about Alison; "you are in the path of duty, and you can with confidence depend on God's power to protect you. It is when we make ways for ourselves, that we are left to reap the fruit of our own doings. But when we walk in His ways, we are under His protection and guidance. As for poor Alison, I know it will be a great blow to her, and will, I have no doubt, be felt by yourself. Indeed, I feel more myself than I should, perhaps, at my time of life. The circumstances under which we became acquainted with each other, the providential deliverance of my dear child through your instrumentality, the frequency of our intercourse with one another, the similarity of our views, and the lack of society in this strange place: All these, together with some others, make me

very melancholy at the thought of your departure."

"As for society," replied Maclandreth, "it providentially happens, that a very dear friend of mine has just come to reside for awhile, at least, in the neighbourhood, and whom I have already introduced to Alison. He will, I am confident, do all that he can to comfort you, for my sake; and I feel assured that you will shew kindness to him for the same reason."

"Of that, indeed, you may feel assured, for anything that I can do, to oblige your friend, shall be done; and should you prefer his living under this roof, till you return, he is welcome."

"No, I have no particular wish for that, as he is, I think, in lodgings belonging to the situation he holds. Nor do I think his habits would very well comport with your retired mode of life. It were also desirable, were he a little more inclined to what is serious and profitable. But you can act according to your own discretion, when you have seen more of him; and I sincerely hope your godly conversation will be productive of great good to him."

"Well, my dear boy, by the time you return, as I hope God will grant you a safe and prosperous journey, we shall have known something more of your friend. At the same time, you may take my word, that he will receive a good treatment under this roof. Old Acehambur was never yet complained of on that score."

"No, I am sure, Mr. Acehambur, none will ever have an occasion to brand you with inhospitality. Indeed, I myself am a living witness of the truth of your assertion."

"Yes, boy, to you I am something more than kin and not less than kind. Really, how very strange that I should express myself in this way now, seeing 'tis more than forty years since I read a line in Shakspeare. The memory of an old man is such an oddity. As life ebbs, the things that were first treasured in the memory and then forgotten, come to sight last. Hence old age may with propriety be said to be a second childhood. If ever you should live to be as old as I am, you will probably think of what I am saying. Do all the good that you can now, while young, so that

you will have nothing of a painful character to mar your latter days. It were indeed a pleasure to die, if one would divest himself of all the cares and anxieties of this life. Had we something like an adequate conception of our destiny as the children of God, how willing we should be to leave this our earthly residence for a more select society and a more gorgeous apartment in the regal palace of our Heavenly Father. Instead of this, it too often happens that the love of life increases with the loss of it. It seems as if at length one had grown fond of the miseries of which life is made up; for life and trouble are synonymous terms. But, really, I am lecturing you instead of attempting to give a more direct counsel to you respecting your journey and the management of your affairs. You will, I know, forgive the liberty that age generally takes with youth."

"Pray, Sir," interrupted Maclandreth, "proceed, I am quite delighted with you remarks, and I hope I shall profit by them, though it is seldom the case to see people profit by the experience of others. In nothing, it appears to me, does the stupidity of man stand forth more

conspicuous than in the rejection of proffered counsel, an aptness and a desire to impart which, nature has, for the wisest ends, so abundantly bestowed upon the old. But, I suppose, while folly is bound in the heart of a child, this will always be the case. There is great aptness in a frequent saying of yours on this subject, which, perhaps, you remember."

"No, I don't. The fact is, I have so many odd sayings, that I sometimes forget them."

"It is something to this effect:—‘that experience is a very dear school; but that fools will learn in no other.’ Do you remember it now?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, I do, is it not very strange, now, that things of this sort should so soon be forgotten? If you had not told me that it was mine, I should have never known it; though I scarcely think others would have mistaken it for mine. It is not likely others would have misfathered it; though one's self, when getting old, like Isaac, often fails to see with clearness, and, consequently, becomes doubtful of his own offspring. I am glad, however, that you remember it; and I sincerely hope, my dear boy, you will profit by it. I have given you as

much as I possibly could of my own poor experience on almost every subject, and I feel somewhat confident as to the issue; for I do not think you are in the habit of letting things pass unimproved. I hope to descend to the grave in peace, leaving my dear child under the protection of one in whom I have the most entire confidence."

"I am sure," rejoined Maclandreth, "I feel greatly flattered by such a compliment, and especially as it comes from one so shrewd and sagacious as yourself, though I know that I little deserve it.. According to the best of my abilities, however, your most sanguine expectations will not be unrealized. Nothing could exceed the joy that would thrill this heart, were it to feel conscious of its becoming more and more worthy of dear Alison. The integrity of my intention none, it appears to me, can rationally question. That she is indispensable to my happiness, my heart has not failed, once and again, to tell me. Indeed the more near the period to leave her comes, the nearer she goes to my heart. My attachment to yourself, also, instead of diminishing,

is vastly augmented. I now feel the truth of what you have often told me, that we know not the real value of our friends till we lose them."

"Yes, my young friend, I never knew the value of my dear wife till she was gone beyond my reach. Her untold worth becomes more conspicuous every day. The few defects, of which I thought her possessed, while sojourning with me in this world, are quite eclipsed by her shining virtues. It seems the office of death to take our friends from us, only with respect to what is mortal of them, while what is spiritual and pure, it gives over exclusively to our affection. Thus our gracious Lord, in all his dealings towards us, always leaves a blessing behind Him. The moment our friends die, all their frailties at once sink into the shade of forgetfulness, while all that is noble and pure stand forth shining with increasing lustre, and like the pillar that led Israel through the wilderness, alluring us on in the path of virtue and holiness, in which they trod. I thought, when my dear wife was alive, that I was doing all that was requisite to

make her happy. But, alas ! I now see so many things wherein I was far too negligent. So it is with life in general ; we never realise our mission in this world till we are quitting it. It is, when too late to repent, that most men begin to think seriously of its necessity, like the Egyptians, who never thought of pausing, to consider what they were about, till the waters of the red sea brought their folly before their eyes, when too late to seek for wisdom."

" What ! so late ?" said Mr. Acehambur, as he heard the clock strike. " Well, my boy, we must to bed now, or we cannot be stirring at our usual hour in the morning. Good night, God bless you."

" And you, too, and may your repose be sweet," rejoined Maclandreth.

CHAPTER XI.

"I'm alone already !
Methinks I stand upon a naked beach,
Sighing to winds and to the seas complaining ;
Whilst afar off the vessel sails away,
Where all the treasure of my soul's embarked.

"Wilt thou not turn ? O, could those eyes but speak !
I should know all, for love is pregnant in them ;
They swell, they press their beams upon me still ;
Wilt thou not speak ? If we must part forever,
Give me but one kind word to think upon,
And please myself with, while my heart is breaking."

THE ORPHAN.

THE first streak of the east, the herald of the much-dreaded day, found the two lovers eagerly watching with palpitating hearts what each feared to encounter and yet burned to enjoy—each other's society. Nothing could exceed the confusion and awkwardness with which everything was managed that morning. Poor Alison was quite ashamed of herself and yet could not help being any one but herself. That she was not her former self was evident to every one; nor was she herself, as far as she was herself unconscious of it. The old

gentleman, her father, also seemed to have been re-cast since the preceding day. He appeared more of a boy than of a sage. He could not utter a syllable without the whine of a schoolboy. The furrows which age had left on his antique visage, were lost in the puckering and mewling of second childhood. Not a trace of his usual jovial manner could be discerned. His heart was too full to speak—his eyes too full of tears to see—and his aged limbs too full of trembling to support him. During sleep he had dreamt that Alison, Ambrose, and himself were at sea. The vessel in which they were sailing seemed old and leaky, and bore upon her stern, written in large characters, *Providence*. The evening they left the port was one of the calmest that could possibly be imagined: the sails were up for awhile and seemed like a dying person gasping for breath, but finding none; they were taken down, apparently quite dead and useless. The sailors lounged to and fro on the deck; everything was painfully quiet; the two lovers were, as the etiquette of nature dictates on such occasions, by themselves, gazing more on each other than on surround-

ing objects. The old gentleman conversed with the captain of the ship; asked him whether he thought they would be favoured with a fair passage, &c. The sailors, guessing he was nervous, began to talk loudly among themselves, throwing out mysterious hints, shaking their heads: and one that seemed more waggish than the rest, went so far as to predict that the capful of wind which was then coming, would end in a freshish gale, but that *old Providence*, he feared, was not so well prepared for such a smartish tug as he thought she would have with that rascally young tempest that was beginning to show itself. This made the old gentleman tremble: turning to the captain he said, with a great deal of gravity:—

“ Do you think, Sir, that we shall have a storm ? ”

Instead of answering him, this gentleman seemed all of a sudden lost in thought, and looking anxiously about as for something he was afraid to find, he shook his head and called out loudly to the hands to bestir themselves, that he feared they would have enough to do

that night. Frightened by this announcement he sought Mr. Maclandreth and Miss Alison, whom he found quite happy in each other's society. Finding him trembling with fear, they tried to comfort him and advised him to go to bed, that he had no need to be so alarmed.

Having seen him safely berthed, Alison returned on deck to bid Mr. Maclandreth good night a second time. About one o'clock in the morning Mr. Acehambur was awaked by the rolling of the ship and an unusual stir on deck. He jumped out of his berth, and in the excitement of the moment, dressed himself with the quickness that he used to dress when young. On his attempting to leave the cabin, he was completely drenched by the rushing in of the waves. The storm became more and more furious. The vessel was now, as with one leap, gaining the summit of a mountainous surge; then, with an inconceivable rapidity, she would plunge into the deep as if never to rise again, and anon she seemed as if still in the agonies of death—helpless in the extreme. When able to breathe he lifted up

his eyes. The whole heaven seemed overcast with a lurid cloud which appeared to emit innumerable streaks of the most unnatural hue. The vessel began to roll again tremendously. Every man that understood how to work was at his post. The waves broke in again with an additional fury. Despair sat on every countenance, and its offspring, horror, flashed from every eye. The women shrieked and fled to the men for protection. But vain was the help of man. He could not save the ship that seemed to tremble within the jaws of death. He tried to make his way towards Maclandreth and his daughter. Seeing his fruitless efforts Mr. Maclandreth left her under the care of another gentleman, pushed his way as well as he could towards the place where he stood convulsed with fear. Alas, while almost within reach, he and two or three others, were swept in an instant overboard into the deep. The shrieks of poor Alison imparted a momentary strength to his feeble frame, and before he had time to think of the recklessness of the attempt, they were in each other's arms.

On waking Mr. Acehambur found himself

in the greatest excitement. His bodily exhaustion plainly shewed the intimate connexion that exists between body and mind ; and how the sufferings of the one affect the other. Some men affect to disbelieve dreams. But I very much doubt whether any well-balanced mind could have regarded such a vivid dream with indifference. And when they forewarn us of approaching calamities, which by timely caution may be avoided, they assume the character of messengers sent from God. Such dreams are among the most extraordinary of the extraordinary occurrences of life. They shew the regard that the Great Parent Spirit has for the welfare of His wayward children upon earth.

Breakfast and family prayer being over, the two lovers hastened to their usual place of meeting in order to fortify each other's mind for the agonizing moment of parting. Every argument that pity, love, and the certainty of meeting in heaven—provided they were never permitted to meet upon earth—could suggest, was advanced. Long and fervid were the prayers they offered up for strength to meet

their fate, and most hallowed was the communion they held with God and each other. Rising from their knees, with strength adequate for the occasion, they parted with each other with all the serenity of mind that an implicit faith in God's wisdom and goodness imparts. The old gentleman, too, when the moment of parting arrived, conducted himself in a manner worthy of his profession and unshrinking confidence in God's Providence. This was not the first time for him to find the Friend that loveth at all times the strength of the lonely, and the succour of him that hath no helper. At the same time, it must be confessed, to lose Mr. Maclandreth must have been a great trial to him, for nothing can be more grateful to old age than to have some kind and strong arm to lean upon while entering the valley of the shadow of death. Hence it is that the Patriarchs considered it such a glory to die in the bosom of their families, surrounded with their numerous offspring. The Hon. William Spencer has beautifully expressed this feeling in his "Wife, Children, and Friends:"—

When the black-lettered list to the Gods was presented,
 The list of what Fate for each mortal intends,
 At the long string of ills a kind Goddess relented,
 And slipped in three blessings—wife, children, and friends.

In vain surly Pluto maintained he was cheated,
 For justice divine could not compass its ends;
 The scheme of man's penance he swore was defeated,
 For earth becomes heaven, with—wife, children, and friends.

If the stock of one bliss is in strange hoards vested,
 The fund, ill-secured, oft in bankruptcy ends ;
 But the heart issues bills which are never protested,
 When drawn on the firm of—wife, children, and friends.

Though valour still glows in his life's dying embers,
 'The death-wounded tar, who his colour defends,
 Drops a tear of regret as he dying remembers
 How bless'd was his home with—wife, children, and friends.

The soldier, whose deeds live immortal in story,
 Whom duty to far-distant latitudes sends,
 With transport would barter all ages of glory
 For one happy day with—wife, children, and friends.

Though spice-breathing gales on his caravan hover,
 Though for him Arabia's fragrance ascends,
 The merchant still thinks of the woodbines that cover
 The bower where he sat with—wife, children, and friends.

The day-spring of youth, unclouded by sorrow,
 Alone on itself for enjoyment depends ;
 But drear is the twilight of age, if it borrow
 No warmth from the smile of—wife, children, and friends.

Let the breath of renown ever freshen and nourish
 The laurel which o'er the dead favourite bends,
 O'er me wave the willow, and long may it flourish,
 Bedewed with the tears of—wife, children, and friends!

Let us drink, for my song, growing graver and graver,
 To subjects too solemn insensibly tends;
 Let us drink—pledge we high, love and virtue shall flavour
 The glass which I fill to—wife, children, and friends !

But the lonely hath none to comfort him :
none to alleviate his sufferings and smooth his
passage to the tomb. Hence it is that the old
bachelor often dies like a pig, despised by the
many, and unregretted by the few that profit
by the issue of his useless life.

CHAPTER XII.

" Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
 Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy—
 Which come, in the night-time of sorrow and care,
 And bring back the features that joy used to wear.
 Long, long be my heart with such memories fill'd!
 Like the vase, in which roses have once been distill'd—
 You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,
 But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

MOORE.

AFTER Mr. Maclandreth's departure, Romsdale's visits to Fair-View Cottage became more frequent and more long. Mr. Acehambur became much attached to him, and his society seemed, in some degree, to supply Mr. Maclandreth's absence. Alison, however, was not so easily wrought upon. His mysterious hints respecting the idol of her heart disgusted her. She eventually suspected what he was driving at. Women seldom fail to perceive in men what they cannot see in each other. They are much more alive to the little things that indicate which way the current flows. The old gentleman was in his second childhood,

and had never, even in his most vigorous time, been of a very suspicious turn of mind. Romsdale saw all this, and his wily nature was not indifferent to the hint. He at once set to work. Nor was he long before he succeeded in his endeavours.

Six long months had rolled on, and not a word was heard of Mr. Maclandreth. During this long suspense the old gentleman had had several attacks of illness, and throughout Romsdale had been most assiduous in his attention to him. This completely won Mr. Acehambur's heart, and led him to unbosom himself freely respecting Maclandreth. He told Romsdale that he had been greatly deceived, and that he never thought any one could have acted such an ungrateful part. "And as for poor Alison," continued he, "she is, I am afraid, lost to all earthly happiness on his account."

To all this Romsdale listened with evident surprise, and simply said, "that he would be unwilling to say anything unkind of his friend. At the same time," said he, "it doth amaze me that he does not write; for, between our-

selves, I do not think CLARE the man to lose, without effort, such a precious jewel as Miss Acehambur is."

"CLARE!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "what do you mean?"

"Oh," replied Romsdale, apparently much confused, "I am very sorry to have let out my friend's real name. I hope you will excuse me, Mr. Acehambur; it is a hard thing for an honest and straightforward person to dissemble."

"Well, Mr. Romsdale, is not his name Maclandreth? His letters always came addressed to him as such."

"Believe me, Mr. Acehambur," said Romsdale, drawing his chair nearer to the old gentleman, "I am extremely sorry to have been, in the least, the occasion of confirming your views of my friend's character. As I said before, it is very difficult for an honest-minded man, like myself, to shield the deceitful."

"Why," replied the old man, "you ought, in justice, Mr. Romsdale, to have spoken of this before, as it so nearly concerns my happiness, and especially the happiness of my dear

child. We have been both of us most awfully deceived in him; and, yet, it may be, after all, that he had some reason for changing his name. I do not think pretensions could have elicited so much sympathy as he was able to command. Besides, I often observed him at his private devotion, to which a hypocrite must ever remain, while he is a hypocrite, a complete stranger. When I bethink myself of these things I cannot but hope that there must be a misunderstanding somewhere or other; at least, Mr. Romsdale, let us hope the best."

"You reason nobly, Sir," interrupted Romsdale. "Give me your hand, my dear Sir, I am but too happy in having met such an unsuspecting and generous friend. A true friend is indeed a treasure, a pearl of great price, an inestimable boon, one of the few gifts that make this miserable *infancy* of our being tolerable. Let me again apologize for having inadvertently disclosed Mr. Maclareth's real name."

"Yes," said the old gentleman, biting his nails, "you are quite certain that his real name is *Clare*, and not Maclareth?"

Romsdale's keen eye at once discovered that all was not yet lost. Availing himself, therefore, of such an auspicious moment, he said, that he could not be mistaken—that they were, in fact, brought up together, and that he could detail every event in his past history to the moment they met him in Bristol, had he not been possessed of too much delicacy to refer to some events in his poor friend's career. At the same time, he observed that there were circumstances in which common candour demanded that all scruples should be overcome, and the truth, and nothing but the truth, be told. "Indeed," continued he, "to deceive such an unsuspecting and generous character as yourself, and to blight with the blasting breath of hypocrisy such a lovely flower, in the very blossom of its prime, as Miss Alison is, surpasses all the atrocities that the annals of crime can supply. You will, I know, Mr. Acehambur, forgive this burst of honest feeling at the thought that one whom I have long cherished as a friend could become such a disgrace to his species."

"Well! well!" said the old gentleman, quite

horrified at the awful picture drawn of his former friend, and intended son-in-law, "I am glad that your judgment prevailed over your natural delicacy of feeling, so as to enable you, Mr. Romsdale, to make these disclosures. They will tend to console my mind by the secret thought that my poor child is still safe, and that Providence would not allow her virgin faith to be fully betrayed by a villain, and her virgin purity to be soiled by such a consummate hypocrite. How wonderful are the ways of Infinite Wisdom prompting him to introduce you to our little circle as a particular friend of his; and then, this very circumstance turning out to the unmasking of his own character, and the awful extent of his nefarious practices. Now I bethink myself, I remember well, when he spoke of you to me, and desired me to be kind to you till his return, I said, that if he liked, I should feel a pleasure in your supplying his place under my roof during his absence, as you seemed to be such a particular friend of his. "No," said he, thoughtfully, "I have no desire, whatever, that he should become such; for I do not think that his habits would ex-

actly accord with your retired mode of living, and besides, he has lodgings provided for him at the works."

"Why, do you not see now," said Romsdale, "that he was afraid lest I should let you know his real character, for he well knew that then it would be all up with him. Oh! the mysteriousness, as you said, of the ways of Providence! It was a mere accident that brought me into this neighbourhood, and my astonishment at meeting CLARE was beyond belief, for I had heard that he had been transported for stealing some plate from a friend's house, at which, on account of his grandfather, he had been invited to spend a few weeks. Then, that I should become acquainted with you, and thus become the instrument of disabusing your noble and generous mind, and to save your dear child from becoming the bride of one so unworthy of such a treasure, and so unqualified for such an exalted enjoyment."

"Thanks be praised," said the old man, "from what an utter ruin we have been saved. Had you been a week longer, my dear friend, in coming to the neighbourhood, my poor

Alison would have been united to a vagabond, an outcast, a runaway, and my grey hairs would have been brought down in sorrow to the grave. Oh! how can I be grateful enough to a superintending Providence, and to you, my dear Romsdale," grasping his hand, while the tears coursed down his aged cheeks, "as the instrument of our deliverance."

"My dear Sir," interrupted Romsdale, "attribute nothing to me. I am but an unconscious instrument, as it were, in the hand of that Great Father Who takes such a good care of you, as if you were the only being He had to care for. I have never felt more happy in my life than I do at this moment, being enabled to rescue virtue from the fangs of vice—purity itself from the grasp of pollution—chastity from the very jaws of depravity. O! with what a sweet revenue virtuous deeds return into one's bosom! O! how I thank God for having planted in my heart such an intense love for the fair, the beautiful, and the virtuous. Mr. Acehambur, did you ever feel such incense of gratitude rising from the altar of your heart?"

"A thousand times, Mr. Romsdale," replied the old man, evidently pleased at such a compliment. "But I never thought you were so capable of appreciating what is really good, my friend. Perhaps, though, I had been a little prejudiced against you, on account of what Mr. Maclandreth said respecting you. But I know you will forgive me, for I was once very fond of that unfortunate young man, and believed everything he said. Poor fellow! he behaved well while under my roof, and I am heartily sorry for him for his own sake."

"It's growing late," said Romsdale, buttoning his coat, "and I must be moving. I am sorry, Mr. Acehambur, I undeceived you about that young man, for you evidently suspect my honour, or you could have no kind thought to spare for that villain."

"Excuse me, Mr. Romsdale," cried Mr. Acehambur, with some energy, "I have no reason to suspect you or doubt your honour, yet the charm of old friendship cannot be forgotten all at once. It is, I think, far more in accordance with the charity recommended in the Bible to

be loth to believe what is evil of any one, especially of an old and tried friend. I cannot but cherish some hope that all is not over with poor Ambrose after all."

"I am glad to find you so charitable," said Romsdale, somewhat coldly—"Good night."

"Good night, Mr. Romsdale, and thank you for your call, and hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you soon again."

After his departure, the old man sunk into a deep reverie. He recalled every little incident in his intercourse with Mr. Maclareth during the period he spent under his roof. There were many things that seemed to give a colouring of truth to what Mr. Romsdale said respecting him; and yet, looking at what he personally knew of him without prejudice, the tendency of the whole was to falsify the statements of his accuser. Moreover, he thought Romsdale a little too personal and unnecessarily severe in his manner of speaking, which, he could not help thinking, betrayed a sad deficiency in the sympathy which the misfortune of our friends is expected to excite.

The more he thought of Mr. Maclareth,

the more was he perplexed. His conduct, provided he was the vile hypocrite Mr. Romsdale would have him to be, was inexplicable. His humility, his religious fervour, his intense love of truth, the propriety of his conduct with regard to Alison, his love of solitude, and the frequency of his private devotional exercises, all combined to constitute a character which none but a true Christian can lay claim to. As he thought of these things, his aged cheek crimsoned with conscious guilt for having allowed Romsdale to utter such vile calumnies without contradicting him, and endeavouring to defend his friend by showing that, however bad he might have been in his younger days, he was quite a changed character while under his roof; that the Divine grace by which the change had been wrought was equal to the perfecting of what it had begun; nay, that such would be the issue; that it was his duty to judge of him from what he knew of his character; that a mere hearsay, without any actual proof, was by no means a proper criterion by which to judge of him; that the accuser was less known to him than the accused,

and that the bold assertion of the one was not of sufficient weight to prejudice his mind against the other. As these thoughts rapidly passed through his mind, he felt all the energies of his soul rising up in arms against the man who had dared prejudice his friend, and by the mere force of his impudence, persuade him that a friendship, short as it was, endeared to him and his by so many pleasing recollections, was a barefaced hypocrisy, a vile imposition.

“ My youth and manhood,” uttered he, with all the energy that attend noble-mindedness, “ ever found me true and faithful to my friend; and is the noble heritage, preserved for so many years, to be taken from me in my old age, by such a small effort as the mere wagging of a stranger’s tongue? No, no! old Acehambur is not so easily imposed upon as this flippant youth thinks. Oh, Percy, Percy! thou knowest, my sainted friend, the intensity of my affections, the depth of my love, the firmness of my friendship.”

As a friend, I need scarcely say, Mr. Acehambur was remarkable for the fervour and constancy of his attachment.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The wicked are like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

ISAIAH.

As he went home, Romsdale felt much disappointed at the failure of his attack on Mr. Maclandreth's character. He was not, however, by any means hopeless. His evil genius was never at a loss, when one mode of assault failed, to bring out another. His mind was most prolific as regards plots, the horrid issues of its nefarious working. He was too accustomed to see his plans frustrated, to feel inclined to relinquish his present design on account of the unfriendly impression which his first attempt seemed to have produced on Mr. Acehambur's mind. His aim, from the moment Maclandreth left, had been to supplant him in the old man's estimation; and he had done much in removing the obstacles that lay

in his way. Mr. Acehambur was in the habit of having his letters conveyed from town in Mr. Williams's letter-bag. This gentleman, the reader should bear in mind, was Romsdale's master. As his clerk, therefore, it was Romsdale's province to keep the key of the letter-bag, and to see that all was rightly managed. Knowing this, Mr. Maclandreth had given him strict orders that he should convey all his letters to Mr. Acehambur and Miss Alison with his own hand. He had also desired him to keep up a regular correspondence with him, informing him of everything respecting his friends, and especially the manner in which poor Alison would bear his absence. All this Romsdale had faithfully promised to do. The first letter, however, that came from Mr. Maclandreth to Miss Alison, together with a small parcel addressed to the old gentleman, he opened, and then, with a grin of diabolical satisfaction, locked up in his own box. In the meanwhile, he wrote to Maclandreth, that Miss Alison had already forgotten him, and was constantly flirting about with a Mr. R—, a wealthy young gentleman in the neighbour-

hood, whom he knew Mr. Maclandreth had for some time suspected of being in love with her, and that the old gentleman had promised him her hand. "Indeed," said he, "it appears to me—though I am sorry to wound your feelings by giving expression to my suspicions—that they, both father and daughter, were heartily tired of you, and were most glad to get rid of such a heartless *fortune-hunter* as they are now pleased to call you. I can assure you, my dearest Ambrose, that all the *ins* and *outs* of Fair-View since you left, are like so many daggers to me, and nothing but my faithfulness and gratitude to you for all your past kindness, could induce me to go there at all. They literally idolize young Mr. R—, and to see the figure that the young puppy cuts where your noble and manly form ought to appear—and as for Alison, she is actually mad for him. I can never think her the same modest retiring-looking creature as she appeared in your society. But you know that this verifies what I have ever thought of woman, that they are 'fair as the moon, and as change-

able too.' Oh, what a world of hypocrisy we live in !

"The other night (wishing to introduce your name, to see what impression it would produce) I asked her whether you had taken all your luggage with you ?"

"Luggage!" she exclaimed, convulsed with laughter, 'a pair of shirts and a suit of clothes, given him by my poor father.'"

"I could contain myself no longer, and lest I should tear her to pieces, I abruptly left the house, and have not entered it since; nor do I think they are sorry for it. Anything that reminds them of you they do not much care for, and on this score they treat me now with the greatest coolness. The contemptible puppy, I am told, has been trying to persuade Alison that I am not respectable enough to be made, as it were, an equal of. Oh! it doth amaze me to see Mammon everywhere idolized, while talents and goodness are everywhere neglected. Yesterday, I went on purpose to see the old gentleman, and spoke as much as I could in your favour. Having told him of your excel-

lent character and the respectable standing of your family, I made bold to tell him that your fortune would now exceed that of young Mr. R——.”

“ He looked undecided. He then said, after a moment's pause :—

“ ‘ Do you think, Mr. Romsdale, that all you say is true ? ’

“ ‘ True ! exclaimed I, utterly amazed that he could doubt, for a moment, what you had told him,—‘ true ! Certainly—as true as I am standing here. Did he not tell you of it before he left ? ’ continued I.

“ ‘ Well,’ he said, ‘ yes, he told me so ; but you see, Mr. Romsdale, I have no proof of it.’

“ ‘ Proof ! ’ said I, wild with indignation, ‘ proof ! and is his own word not a sufficient proof, and mine a sufficient corroboration of it ? It is evident,’ I said to him, ‘ that you do not yet know my noble and generous friend, or you could never suspect him, or prefer any other before him as your future son-in-law. His word, I can assure you, Mr. Acehambur, is as good as a bond, any day. He is integrity personified. Goodness,’ I exclaimed, vehe-

mently, 'and Ambrose Maclandreth are synonymous terms.' Was not this noble, my fine fellow? What is friendship worth, if we do not stick up for each other and make the most of it? The old man is, I am afraid, prejudiced against you, some how or other. What did your last letter to him contain? He has not been the same since. I hope you said nothing that could vex him. Poor old fool! he is in his second childhood, it requires a vast deal of prudence and skill to manage him; but I do not yet despair, I think I perceive some symptoms of relenting about him; trust the whole affair to me, my dear fellow, and I am confident I can bring it to a favourable issue, after all. It would be a misfortune to lose her, changeable as she is. When married, she must grow constant; she has a finer fortune than I at first thought; but to secure it for you, my dear fellow, is the grand point, and to the attaining of which, my utmost efforts, you may depend upon it, shall be directed. You cannot think how my heart dilates with pleasure at the idea of its being within my power, in some small degree, at least, to requite the innume-

rable instances of kindness received from you. Believe me, my dearest Ambrose, your last lecture to me before you left has not been given in vain. I am an altered man altogether—a new being, such a one, I trust, in every respect, as your excellent self would wish to see."

This is the manner in which this consummate hypocrite used to go on in his letters to such an invaluable friend—one that had done so much to serve him. While this amiable and unsuspecting youth was just preparing to return to his friends to Fair-View Cottage, having settled his worldly affairs, and full of buoyant hope with regard to the happiness he thought Providence had in store for him, he was suddenly called to a distant part of the Continent to attend the dying wishes of his brave father, who had received a mortal wound at the battle of ——.

It was thus that this amiable young man was destined like a fair flower to give out the sweetness of his excellent nature, by being trampled upon by the crushing heel of affliction.

This unavoidable putting off of his return, afforded time to his secret enemy to mature

his plans. Having insinuated himself into all Mr. Acehambur's secrets, and thus ascertained the amount of his property, he conceived the bold measure of making a proposal for Miss Alison's hand, in order to make sure of the prize before his rival's return; and in case he should fail there, as he had his fears he would, he had in his mind a more desperate and atrocious scheme, which would not fail to realize his wishes. Hardened as he was in villainy, the corruption of this last scheme in the annals of crime connected with the idea, in the case of a possible failure, of taking this last step in the career of infamy, sent a thrill of horror through his soul, and convulsed his whole frame. Such feeling, however, was with him but momentary, as the shivering felt by the bather at the first plunge. Once fairly in, he thought no more of fear. Indecision left him, and he pursued the atrocious career he had marked out for himself, with all the coolness and recklessness that the habit of yielding to temptation ultimately engenders. How awfully rapid the progress of crime! Who would have thought that the idea of proposing

to a virtuous young lady, would have been the forerunner of such a horrible design, the father of such a repulsive monster?

During Mr. Maclandreth's residence on the Continent, Romsdale kept up a regular correspondence with him. His letters, however, were a mere tissue of falsehood from beginning to end. He wrote what he considered most conducive to the furtherance of his designs.

Mr. Maclandreth, on the other hand, opened to him all his heart; whatever he did or said bore the real stamp of sincerity. He was ignorant of the way of the dissembler—his character was hateful to him. Whenever he happened to doubt Romsdale's sincerity, he at once disclosed to him his suspicions, not even concealing what in his letters had given rise to them, in order that he might have an opportunity of removing them and clearing himself. Now this was just the kind of person that Romsdale liked, because such a transparent character could be at once seen through. Such he firmly believed Maclandreth to be. He, therefore, felt that whilst their correspondence was kept up, he was perfectly safe, inas-

much as all his movements would be known to him; and as to the old gentleman and his daughter, he could easily manage to keep them in the dark respecting his knowing anything of Maclandreth's whereabouts. Seeing that everything seemed to wear such a friendly aspect, he no longer entertained the shadow of a doubt as to the success of his undertaking. "Nothing venture, nothing have," was a favourite maxim with him; and now he fancied himself already reaping the delicious fruits of what he deemed his own cleverness. He had, by over-rating his own abilities, argued himself into the absurd notion that he possessed all the elements requisite to constitute a first-rate man, and that nothing but favourable circumstances were necessary to bring him out. Then, bending over the small fire in his small bare-walled office, he would picture to himself the astonishment of the world at the bare possibility of such a genius having ever attained such an astounding growth, while flourishing unnoticed in the deep shade of obscurity. He was already the idol of the gay circles of the metropolis—the brilliancy of his wit, the talk of the town

—his society courted by all—the fair dying for him—and the rising youth of the realm apeing him. Many a time had his cheeks crimsoned at the thought, that as he was passing through the streets he saw his own likeness in every bookseller's window, and heard the whisper going round, “Now, look! do you not see? there goes the great Romsdale, the Secretary of State. Isn't he a splendid fellow!” Not unfrequently, while he was stunned by the plaudits of an admiring Senate, and trembling at his own elevation, Mr. Williams would enter the office, unnoticed by the great senator, and having taken off his comforter and laid his lusty stick on the table, would tap him gently on the shoulder, saying:—

“Well, clerk, my dear fellow, this won't do at all; you don't get on with your work; I must really, my good fellow,” rubbing his hands as hard as he could, and looking as angry as his fat, good-natured face would allow, “I must look for another clerk, unless you reform and stick closer to your work.”

Oh, what a fall was here! From the highest pinnacle of ambition to be thus thrown down,

at once, into a poor clerk's condition, and that not likely to be his long; and thus to be threatened by a man remarkable for nothing but an extreme dulness, encased in a good-natured lump of flesh. The flash of indignation that gleamed in Romsdale's eyes at hearing his great name thus profaned, almost frightened his employer out of the small wit he had. This little incident, insignificant as it may appear, greatly helped to confirm him in his absurd ambition.

"Now," said he to himself, when his employer had left him, "there must be something extraordinary about my whole appearance; something commanding, grand, and majestic; otherwise, how could the employed awe and quell his employer by his mere look, as I have just done? The man, incapable, as he is, of receiving any impression and appreciating what is really noble, could not stand in my presence; but was obliged to leave, though he be my master. Oh, the Gods! I thank you for having singled me out of the common herd, as a man made to command and destined for great achievements. What signifies," said he, with

an unconscious shiver, as he uttered the words, "what signifies if I must wade to my destiny through human gore. Others have done so before me. The great Napoleon was carried by torrents of blood to an empire—the position that the fates had assigned to him. And, why may not I attain my desired end by similar means? I am determined not to rot away ingloriously in this obscure condition. Better be known and admired as an accomplished villain, than to die as a ridiculous fool, having spent his life in poverty and servitude. I must redeem the noble character for which the gods designed me, or I cannot expect their aid.

"I am resolved. I will venture all on a single throw. May Fate assist me!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"He stood—some dread was on his face,
Soon hatred settled in its place :
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient anger's darkening blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed ;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high."

BYRON.

"ALISON, my dear," said Mr. Acehambur to his daughter, who was so weak that she could scarcely raise herself up in bed, "how do you feel this morning? I hope, better. Your pulse is rather quick, my love, and you are none the worse for that, dear, and yet you seem very sad. What! no smile for your poor old father? I am sure something ails you. What! has any one dared to annoy my poor pet?"

"Oh, papa! you are too good, too kind to me. How can I be grateful enough to God for giving me such a father! What should I have

done, now, had it not been for you, my dear father?"

"Come, come, my love, I am sure you have something to ask of me. How coaxing you are! You have such ways about you! So like your poor mother." The old gentleman's voice became weak and tremulous as he uttered the last words, and the tears coursed down his cheek.

"Papa," cried Alison, "what is the matter? You always weep whenever you mention my mamma's name. Was she not good? Is she not happy? Did she not tell you, when she died, that she was going to Heaven, and that you would meet her and her brother there? Why weep for her, then? Do you wish to see her back in this miserable world again?"

"No, no, my love," cried the old man, "I would not rob her of her eternal bliss, were I able to do so. But you know, my dear, that one cannot always command one's feelings. And mine are very tender this morning, I have passed such a restless night. Our complicated misfortunes lay heavily on my spirits."

"Why, papa," asked Miss Alison, "what

misfortunes are you alluding to? I think we are better off than many, and have every reason to be thankful. Think of the thousands that are racked with excruciating pain, on the bed of sickness, or pining away in exile, or are found in the commission of great crimes, or about to expiate their offences on the scaffold. Think of the many that were during the past night burnt out of houses, or have perished by shipwreck, or have been robbed, or murdered."

"True, my darling, you are quite right," exclaimed Mr. Acehambur, "I was wrong to murmur at our lot."

"Yes, papa," added Alison, "for what cause can we have for murmuring against God's dealings towards us? Ought we not to be contented with what we have, rather than make ourselves miserable about what we have not? Depend upon it, papa, we shall never feel as happy as we ought, unless we keep far from the objects that render us miserable. If we keep near God, and implicitly trust Him, we shall be happy, for He is the source of happiness. On the other hand, if the wicked be our associates, we can rationally expect nothing but trouble and anguish."

"Why, my dear, what are you alluding to?" continued Mr. Acehambur. "We associate with no wicked people. You know, my dear, that we live almost like hermits."

"Yes, papa, it were far better for us, were we not almost but altogether so, than being as we are. My dearest father, forgive me for what I am about to say! You have become quite a changed man since this Romsdale has become so intimate with you. You are not at all the placid, happy, patriarchal being that you used to be. Every visit of his leaves you worse than before. Your nights become restless, your whole demeanour fretful, and even your step feeble and undecided. What can he be saying to you to make you so miserable? Why not tell him at once never to enter this house again?"

The old man stood transfixed with astonishment; trembling from head to foot; while the keen eye of his daughter, still fixed upon him, shone with fearful brilliancy. He had never before witnessed such a display of grace, firmness, and conscious dignity in the fragile and beautiful form of his beloved child. He scarcely

durst believe his own senses, so imposing was the sight. Feeling that all she said was exactly the case, he hardly knew what to say for himself. At length, having gained a command over his own feelings, he said, that he was astonished to hear her sentiments relative to Mr. Romsdale's visits; that it was true, since his recent illness, he had not felt as he used to feel in his younger days; nor could he be expected, at his time of life, to experience all the buoyancy of youth, and the calm and dignified bearing of manhood; and that he could not think of forbidding the house to a man to whom he had pledged himself to show kindness.

" You know, my dear," continued he, " that Mr. Maclandreth made me promise him, before he left, that I would, for his sake, act kindly towards Mr. Romsdale. Such being the case, you see, dear Alison, that to treat him unkindly would, in effect, be to treat Mr. Maclandreth so."

" Now, papa, allow me, seriously, to ask you one question? Is he not the cause of your uneasiness of mind, sleepless nights, lack of appetite, nervous excitement, &c.? Do you not

always, after his visits, feel unwell, low-spirited, and irritable ? ”

“ Why, child,” exclaimed the old man, “ you are forgetting yourself : you really treat me as if I were a child, and not a parent whose grey hairs ought, at any rate, to claim some respect. What ! am I to be questioned like a schoolboy by my own daughter ? Alison, do you really think your father in his second childhood, unable to discern between right and wrong ; and to act as a gentleman and a Christian ought to act ? I must tell you, child, that old Aceham-bur will, by God’s help, never be accused of inhospitality, or of not fulfilling the promise he has given to a friend.”

“ Papa,” cried Alison, bursting into tears, “ Heaven knows that I never, even in thought, doubted your parental authority. You mis-understand me altogether, indeed you do, dear papa ! Treat me not as a child ; but speak to me as one only beloved and obedient daughter. My desire is not to offend you, but to relieve your anxieties by removing the cause. If I have misunderstood the cause, or mistaken the way to remove it, forgive a dutiful daughter’s

blind solicitude respecting the health and comfort of an only and beloved parent."

"Forgive you, my own precious child! yes, and kiss away those sweet tears, the precious pledges of your filial love and obedience. I can never thank you enough, my dearest, for the tenderness with which you requite the blessings you have received from your poor old father, assist him down the decline of life, and with the sweetness of your disposition chase away the horrors of the tomb."

"Now, indeed, you speak like my poor father, and your sweet countenance is again lighted up with happiness. I hope that hateful Romsdale will never come again to destroy your peace of mind and disturb the repose of your sanctified spirit."

"Hush! my love, that is not right. Hatred ought never to be cherished in the heart of a Christian. Hatred is the characteristic attribute of the enemy of God and man."

"Why, papa, God himself hates evil and those that do it. 'He is angry every day with the wicked.' It is not Mr. Romsdale's person that I hate; though I can scarcely say that I

love even that ; but his wicked and artful insinuations respecting Ambrose, which I cannot yet but believe to be the cause of your unhappiness. Come, my dear father, what makes you so reserved with me ? I am all openness with you. You used to be so with me, and then you were happy—we were both happy. Is not Romsdale Ambrose's deadly enemy ? Why conceal anything from me ? Am I not your daughter ? Do I not inherit your kind disposition ? Am I not like my dear mother ? ”

“ Alison, Alison ! what do you mean by all these tender appeals to my feelings ? ”

“ Only, papa, to remove the cause of your late indisposition, and increase your comforts.”

“ To be candid with you then, my girl, I am afraid Mr. Romsdale is not exactly what I should call a friend to poor Ambrose.”

“ I know it, and I can give you a reason or two that may tend to throw some light on the subject.”

“ Well, you astonish me ! Let me hear what you have to communicate.”

“ Ah ! there now, you won't be angry, will you ? You thought I did not know what ailed

you, did you ? Never think me so short-sighted again, papa ! Well, the other day, you know, I went to C——."

" Well ! "

" While there, I called at the post-office and asked the post-master, shewing him Ambrose's handwriting, whether any letters, addressed in that hand, passed through the office. He called his daughter, and his wife, and the letter-carrier that used to help them to assort the letters, showed them the handwriting of Ambrose, asked them whether any letters in that handwriting had passed through their office. They three, all at once, said, ' that they had often seen letters addressed in that hand to several people, and as they were, generally, addressed, " care of Mr. Romsdale," they were invariably put into Mr. Williams's letter-bag.' "

The old man looked quite stupefied, fixed his eyes on the ground, and remained silent for several minutes. Then turning to his daughter, said :—

" Why did you not tell this before, my dear, it would have saved me a world of trouble?"

" It was only the other day, papa, that I was at C——."

"True, true! you are quite right, love."

"I have another secret to communicate to you respecting this great hypocrite, that my honour has been assailed by him; the impurity of his language I dare not repeat."

"What, what!—what do you mean, Alison?"

"I mean, papa, that this villain has attempted, in more ways than one, to corrupt your daughter's morals."

"Vile hypocrite!" cried the old man, "and is he the man to traduce poor Ambrose's character? Fool that I was to listen to him! Let him dare show his sinister face to me again! Would he were here! He would feel the weight of these arms, aged as they are—the consummate villain!"

"Come, come, papa! that is scarcely worthy of your grey hairs."

"Alison, did Ambrose ever say anything to you of an improper character? Come, deal faithfully with your poor old father, dearest."

"Ambrose say anything improper! Why, you know, father, that he is purity itself. Never did he utter a word to me that angels might not have caught, echoed and re-echoed

through the pure regions of the celestial country ; from his lips nothing but gracious words dropped, such as seraphs might use while speaking to each other."

" And yet," exclaimed Mr. Acehambur, with energy, " this hateful Romsdale durst tell me things respecting Mr. Maclandreth that would shock humanity to hear. And to me, Ambrose's bosom friend. Oh ! how I loathe myself for having listened to him—for having proved unfaithful to that innocent and excellent young man."

" How well I divined the source of your misery. Would to God I had spoken sooner to you, for it would have saved you many painful reflections ! Nothing, I think, tends more to brighten the retrospect of life, than the consciousness that we have proveed faithful to our friends, however misunderstood we may have been by them."

" Thou art your father's daughter, my noble girl. Never did I before even tolerate for a moment, the traducer of a friend, and I hope soon to show you that this apparent false step has been retrieved."

CHAPTER XV.

"When we see the first glory of youth pass us by,
Like a leaf on the stream that will never return;
When our cup, which had sparkled with pleasure so high,
First tastes of the other, the dark-flowing urn;
Then, then is the moment affection can sway
With a depth and a tenderness joy never knew;
Love, nursed among pleasures, is faithless as they,
But the love, born of sorrow, like sorrow is true."

MOORE.

MR. MACLANDRETH having discharged the last duty that gratitude and love could fulfil, relative to his departed parent; he hastened to return home to Fair-View, to console his friends there, and be consoled by them in return. He knew that their joy would be mutual. This assurance filled his heart with hope, and his mind became fraught with the delicious pleasures of anticipated happiness. How often it occurs in the life of the most favoured children of Providence, that joy proves itself the harbinger of sorrow. It is well, however, that God conceals from us the approaching calamity, in order to give us the full benefit of the enjoy-

ment of the present. The thought of one day returning to the bosom of his friends and claiming the idol of his heart, had supported him under all his heavy trials, and now that he was about to realize all his wishes, he hardly knew how to contain himself. But even the thought of seeing his friends had, before he was half-way to them, become somewhat tinged with gloomy apprehensions that all might not be as he could wish. Happily for him, his knowledge of Romsdale's character prevented him from believing what he had told him respecting Alison. He, moreover, felt thoroughly convinced that Romsdale never gave the Aceham-burs his letters. And then came the delicious thought of taking the old gentleman and Alison by surprise. How they would cling to him! Then he tried to imagine what would be the first words that dear Alison would utter, feigning, as near as he could, her sweet voice, and becoming transported with the joke. These innocent and pleasant musings lasted till he arrived at C—.

When fairly there, the first thing he did was to call on Mr. E—, the banker, to enquire

after the welfare of Mr. Acehambur and Miss Alison. To his great surprise he was told that the old gentleman had just left the house, taking with him all the money he had deposited there. Losing no time, Mr. Maclandreth immediately made after his old friend. His conduct was, from all he could learn from Mr. E---, inscrutable. While racking his brains with fruitless conjectures, and wild with joy at the thought of so soon embracing his beloved friends, he stumbled over the body of a man stretched across the path that led from the high road to Fair-View Cottage, apparently quite drunk.

On feeling the pulse, he found the body warm, but circulation had ceased. The head was also frightfully disfigured. The murderer had done his work and escaped. But who could the murdered man be? Oh, horrid thought!—the worst of his conjectures were verified. At that moment, Mr. Acehambur's servants, being alarmed at his being out so late, came with a lantern to the very spot where Maclandreth stood, petrified at the piteous sight before him.

The sight of the good old servants, and the

bloody corpse of his old friend, Mr. Acehambur, quite deprived him of utterance, until he heard one of the servants crying for help, and telling the other to secure the murderer, pointing to him. Vain were all his remonstrances. Every voice—for there were many now present—demanded his friend's blood at his hands; and some indistinctly muttered between their teeth, “Mr. Romsdale was right in what he said respecting him.” While others, frantic with rage, clenched their fists and gnashed their teeth, giving vent to the most awful imprecations. The news spread like wild-fire through the whole neighbourhood—that Mr. Maclandreth had returned, and had murdered his old benefactor, Mr. Acehambur. Horror and indignation were discernible in every countenance: all hastened to the awful scene. During the whole night, scarcely an individual closed his eyes in the neighbourhood: the excitement that prevailed was unparalleled in the annals of that quiet locality. Nor can we wonder that such was the case, when we consider the strong circumstantial evidence that existed against Mr. Maclandreth.

The day after, an inquest was held on the body, at Fair-View Cottage, when, after a deliberation of nearly eight hours, a verdict of "wilful murder" was returned against Mr. Ambrose Maclandreth, and he was committed for trial accordingly.

The evidence of the servants were regarded by all as conclusive; but, in addition to theirs, Mr. E——, the banker, of C——, stated that Mr. Maclandreth called upon him immediately after Mr. Acehambur had left, and, being told that the old gentleman had taken with him all the money he had deposited in his hands, he refused to stay there for a moment, but at once rushed out after the old gentleman. The evidence of this gentleman settled the question at once.

There was, however, one circumstance which caused a considerable doubt to hang on the whole proceeding; namely, that not a farthing of the old gentleman's money was found on Mr. Maclandreth's person; and, what was equally mysterious, not a farthing was found on the person of the murdered man himself.

It were vain to describe poor Maclandreth's

feelings while wading through the deep waters of affliction. He had become so stupified and unconcerned, that many were led to doubt the soundness of his mind; others ill-naturedly hinted that it was but a scheme of his, in order to defeat Justice. The coherency, however, with which, when called upon, he related all the circumstances connected with his return—his calling upon Mr. E——, the banker—the cause of the abruptness with which he left that gentleman's house—and the finding of the body—went a great way to dispel any delusion that might have existed respecting his sanity.

It were hard to say whether Maclandreth or his beloved Alison were most to be pitied. The one had lost a friend and a betrothed; the other, a beloved parent and an intended husband—and both loved almost to idolatry. Who, therefore, from the susceptible nature of her sex, can conceive her agonies? Her poor father's mangled body was with her in the house; her beloved Ambrose charged with his death; and, according to the tenor of the verdict brought against him, would soon suffer an ignominious death upon the scaffold. Though

she, herself, believed him innocent and pure, every one else regarded him as guilty, and shuddered at the very mention of his name. She constantly, while raving under her complicated misfortunes, uttered his name with wild delight and maddening affection, in connection with that of her murdered parent; and incessantly desired to see him.

She, moreover, in the most confident manner, fixed the perpetration of the deed upon Mr. Romsdale, and what gave some likelihood to her assertion was, that that worthy individual had decamped the very night the murder had taken place. A pistol had also been found in an adjoining field, which Mr. Maclandreth, on seeing, pronounced to be Mr. Romsdale's, and that he, himself, had once nearly been murdered by the same weapon, handled by the same individual.

This assertion was, of course, looked upon as a mere fabrication in order to clear himself. Everybody argued that if Mr. Romsdale had tried to murder Mr. Maclandreth, Mr. Maclandreth would not have exerted himself to get a place for him, nor would he have introduced

him to Mr. Acehambur as a particular friend of his. All, with one consent, pronounced poor Maclandreth an unqualified vagabond and liar.

In a few days, however, the whole neighbourhood became stunned with the intelligence that Mr. Romsdale was in custody, at Southampton, for robbing a lady that travelled in the same coach with him; and what was still more astounding, that Mr. Acehambur's notes and other papers were found on his person; and that no doubt could be entertained of his being the murderer of Mr. Acehambur.

The rage so universally felt against poor Maclandreth, at once gave way to the deepest sympathy and the sincerest compassion. That very day, there was not a hand in the neighbourhood but would have instantly broken his fetters, and led him out of the prison in triumph.

The next tidings respecting Romsdale were, that he had made a full confession of the murder, together with the fraud he practised on Maclandreth's credulity; and that what he said respecting the pistol having been levelled at his head was perfectly true. The news-

papers teemed with laudatory compliments on Maclandreth's character; and imprecations on Romsdale's villainy.

Poor Alison had borne up under all her heavy calamities with extraordinary fortitude. She still loved Maclandreth to madness, and believed him innocent and pure throughout. She, moreover, had convinced most of her friends, before any tidings of Romsdale had been received, that he was her father's murderer; and that it was he who had persuaded her father to take his money out of the bank, stating, that he had heard, on good authority, that it was about to close.

The sudden realization of her wishes, however, respecting her beloved Ambrose, produced a very different effect upon her susceptible mind, from what might have been expected. A sad proof that man is born to trouble in this world, rather than happiness.

When poor Ambrose left the prison, he at once repaired to the darling of his soul, the report of whose assertion of his innocence had given sweet liberty to thought, while the body was immured in a dungeon; but the moment

she saw his face and heard his voice, she flew at him with a wild shriek of joy that announced the wreck of her noble intellect. Maclandreth himself became almost frantic when he saw the symptoms of madness that glared in her intelligent and beautiful eyes. Heart-broken, he took her to London, where, in less than six months, to his unspeakable joy, she completely recovered.

Being advised by the medical man, that a change of scene for a few months would greatly tend to prevent a relapse, they both joined a highly-respectable family just leaving for the Continent, with whom they continued till their return to England, where they were happily united in the strong bonds of wedlock. They soon grew tired of the gaieties of the metropolis, and left for their country-seat, where all their youthful expectations of happiness have been fully realized. Blessed with a numerous and healthy progeny, amply provided for by the Providence that gave them. What more could be desired ?

" Beware of desperate steps, the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."



